the weekly Standard

DECEMBER 8, 2003 $3.95

BUSH'S PRESCRIPTION FOR VICTORY
FRED BARNES • MATTHEW CONTINETTI

Holiday Reading

ANDREW FERGUSON on a shelf full of Bush bashers
MICHAEL S. KOCHIN on the works of J. M. Coetzee
J. BOTTUM on new books worth giving
. . . and more!

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the weekly Standard

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Strange Bedfellows

It's been a Personal Lifestyle Choices theme month in the Democratic presidential contest. On November 14, for example, John Kerry opted out of the federally financed system of primary-phase "matching funds"—a decision apparently intended to shore up Kerry's image as a steely-eyed fighter willing to make the tough call, come what may, *even if the missus hasn't given her okay*. In an interview published the following day with Patrick Healy of the *Boston Globe*, Kerry "emphasized that he did not seek his wife's permission to make yesterday's move."

Early last week, not to be outdone, Dick Gephardt, THE SCRAPBOOK has learned, did not seek his wife's permission before agreeing to a live interview with *Hardball*'s Chris Matthews immediately following a multi-candidate debate in Des Moines, Iowa. Gephardt's wife, Jane, is a woman, incidentally. Which means that she's involved in what her husband—responding to a Matthews question about homosexual civil unions—would refer to as a "non-same-sex marriage."

Same-sex couples "deserve to have all the rights that people do that are in a non-same-sex marriage," Gephardt argued. Including, presumably, the right to engage in non-non-traditional behavior like not consulting your mate about campaign strategy.

Then there's Dennis Kucinich, who has had not one but two non-still-intact marriages and is currently participating in a vote-by-Internet sweepstakes designed to find him a third non-same-sex opportunity for bliss.

"As a bachelor, I get to fantasize about my First Lady," Kucinich mused aloud during a New Hampshire candidates' forum on November 5. "And I certainly want a dynamic, outspoken woman who was fearless in her desire for peace in the world and for universal single-payer health care and a full employment economy." Responding to the poor man's plaintive appeal ("If you're out there, call me," he said), two websites, *Politics NH.com* and *Liberalhearts.com*, have since teamed up to sponsor—with Kucinich's approval—"the Search for a Mrs. Kucinich."

The *Akron Beacon-Journal* lately reports that the effort has "uncorked an unexpected torrent of lust and longing from the nation's Reiki instructors and anti-war activists." (Yes, we had to look it up, too: Reiki is a "widely-known" form of "energy healing.") Eighty of the hopefuls were originally accepted as formal applicants for the honor of Rep. Kucinich's hand, and nearly 50 of them are still in the running.

The contest ends this week, and THE SCRAPBOOK encourages its readers to make their voices heard. But we decline to make any specific endorsement, simply because we can't make up our minds. Maybe "Kate," the Los Angeles art student who's sent in a photograph of herself covered in fake blood at a war protest outside the Oscar ceremonies. Or "Kathy" from Des Moines, who says she's given "more than 20 percent of my take-home pay" to Kucinich's campaign over the past four months (though "I don't really care about being a first lady, I just want to be Mrs. Dennis Kucinich").

Or how about "Lucy," the Unitarian Universalist minister from Connecticut? "I floss" and "balance my checkbook every month," Lucy discloses.

Also, she's "Howard Dean's first cousin." ♦

It's Not Called "The Head" for Nothing

According to Marisa Buchanan, MSNBC's "embedded" reporter on Wesley Clark's presidential campaign, Gen. Clark chose a November 18 appearance in Plymouth, New Hampshire, to reveal a . . . well, most peculiar detail concerning the twinned functioning of his psyche and digestive system. Buchanan recounts that Clark was asked "about his disposition—how does he handle stressful situations and how does he deal with anger?" Whereupon the general offered up the example of June 11, 1999, an especially tense day during his NATO command in the Balkans. The Russians had unilaterally crossed the Drina River and headed into Kosovo; it was "alliance warfare at its most challenging," Clark remembered.

"[So] what I did is, after about three hours of this, I decided I really needed to go to the restroom, and then I felt a whole lot better." Because "sometimes you just gotta get up and clear your head and that's what I did."

Thanks for sharing, General. ♦

The Bigot in the Machine

In freeing-downtrodden-peoples-of-the-world-from-the-yoke-of-oppres-

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sion news, Los Angeles officials have requested that their suppliers and contractors no longer provide computer equipment labeled "master" and "slave"—commonplace industry designations for primary and secondary hard drives. Reuters reports that Joe Sandoval, manager of the city's purchasing program, has sent a memo instructing municipal vendors that "this is not an acceptable identification." Given "the cultural diversity and sensitivity of Los Angeles County," Sandoval explains, the "master" and "slave" euphemisms "could be interpreted as discriminatory or offensive in nature."

According to Reuters, Sandoval was prompted to issue this diktat after an unidentified city employee, having spied such potential offensiveness on devices attached to a videotape machine, filed a formal discrimination complaint with Los Angeles County's Office of Affirmative Action Compliance.

No word yet on how Los Angeles thinks disk drives ought to be labeled instead. Meantime, THE SCRAPBOOK recommends that Joe Sandoval and the discrimination-complaint filing worker be referred to as "Dumb" and "Dumber." ♦

There'll Always Be a Realm

While President Bush was in London making a show of support for his politically beleaguered friend Tony Blair, a British gentleman named John Gouriet was here in Washington, attempting to drum up support among American conservatives for a project that involves, among other things, hanging Blair in effigy—for, Gouriet says, "obvious reasons."

Gouriet, you see, is chairman of the "Defenders of the Realm" and the "Battle for Britain Campaign," an 8,000-member group of right honorable Englishpeople determined to prevent "the unlawful imposition of an E.U. constitution on the United Kingdom."

Gouriet & Co. intend to petition the queen and parliament to such effect and further intend, should that effort prove unavailing, to demand that the queen "uphold her Coronation vows and, if necessary, dissolve Parliament." Shall British blood be enslaved to a "wicked" continental bureaucracy in Brussels? No!

Not without one hell of a public relations stunt, anyhow. The Defenders plan to sail a 100-year-old three-masted brigantine, the *Kathleen & May*, straight up the Thames and anchor her off the Tower of London. Where, from somewhere amidst her red sails and black hull, they will conduct that effigy-hanging business. And Blair won't be the only victim. There'll also be former prime minister Ted Heath ("who took us into this ghastly mess") and an additional Europhile malefactor. Gouriet explains: "We're leaving it for people to decide who they'd like to see swing."

Among the Washington dignitaries granting Mr. Gouriet a brief audience: Attorney General John Ashcroft. ♦

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Casual

Boola What?

"You fumbled the ball! You fumbled the ball! You embarrassed yourself and your team and your MOTHER!" Until you've had these words shouted directly into your ear by 100 drunken horn players in unison, you haven't really lived. Last weekend, I was lucky enough to relive this experience at the 120th Harvard-Yale football game, known to regulars simply as The Game.

Full disclosure: I'm a huge dork. That fact alone doesn't distinguish me from most Yalies. But my dork credentials got a boost freshman year when I joined the Yale Precision Marching Band, thus reaching the pinnacle of dorkiness at the tender age of 17. The YPMB's formations aren't particularly precise, it doesn't march, and it includes enough electric guitars and violins to throw its status as a band into question. The band's primary purpose is to come up with cheers and shout them at games, to delight and entertain, well, mostly themselves.

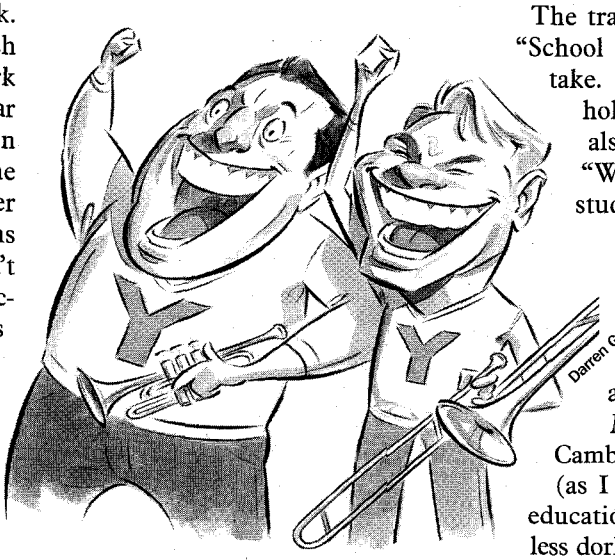
One of my personal favorites, dating back to the '30s, honors the university's founder, Elihu Yale: *Needles, needles! Stitches, stitches! / Come on FIGHT you sons of . . . Eli!* Say it out loud if you don't get it. And don't worry about the weird look from the guy sitting next to you—it happens all the time.

The "sons of Eli" cheer dates from roughly the same time Yale was adapting a German drinking song for its alma mater (a tune later immortalized by singing Nazis in *Casablanca*), buying up raccoon coats by the boatload (many of which can still be seen on older alumni at their caviar and champagne tailgates), and getting an obviously boozy alumnus Cole Porter to pen "Bull-Dog" (a fight song whose lyrics consist primarily of barking).

Other cheers, of more recent vintage, are less subtle. Among them: *Give me a B, Give me an R, Give me an A! Hold 'em! Hold 'em!* and *Blood makes the grass grow! Die! Die! Die!* Repetition, you'll notice, is a feature of all the best cheers.

But one of the simplest and most elegant cheers was at the heart of the scandal of this year's Game.

During a routine 8 A.M. security sweep of the Yale Bowl, when the most dedicated tailgaters already had festivities well underway in the parking lot, New Haven and Yale police found an unidentified object attached to the back of the scoreboard.



Though it's hard to imagine that anything could destroy the Yale Bowl, a massive concrete edifice opened just in time for The Game 1914, the package touched off a bomb scare. After hours of traffic jams and diverted revelers, it was determined to contain fireworks and a banner reading "No School on Monday," set to unfurl across the scoreboard at some point in the fourth quarter.

This slogan is a time-tested favorite of Yale students, who have a full week off for Thanksgiving. Harvard kids are obliged to tromp back to Cambridge and put in a few more dreary days of class before they can head home Wednesday night for turkey and stuffing.

The "School on Monday" cheer is particularly cherished by the YPMB. In fact, drum major Mark S. Lee says "the authorities suspect us, the band, of planting the device because we mentioned 'School on Monday' in our show." He conceded that the halftime show featured a horse of that name, a "horse that we beat and turned into glue."

Lee denies, however, that the YPMB was involved. "We had nothing to do with this at all, I can say that with almost complete certainty," he told the Harvard *Crimson*.

The traditional Harvard reply to "School on Monday" is tough to take. When provoked, they holler, "Safety School!" They also sport T-shirts that read "What do Harvard and Yale students have in common? They both got into Yale." As if any of us would prefer a school whose mascot is a Cantab. (What the hell is a Cantab, you ask? Exactly.)

My sister is a junior at Cambridge Community College (as I prefer to call her chosen educational establishment) and is less dorky than I am. She declined to join the Harvard band. This does not stop her from repeating their jeers to me, especially this year, when Yale was tragically defeated 37-19. I can only assume that Harvard somehow managed to inflate the score the way they inflate their grades.

Having thus far spared you, Gentle Reader, our more indelicate cheers and slogans, I'm afraid I cannot omit the most beloved. It is considered appropriate for all occasions, and its words and sentiment are fixed in the heart of every Yalie, even those who have no idea what "Boola Boola" means: Harvard sucks, and Princeton doesn't matter.

Katherine Mangu-Ward

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Cold Case

Stephen F. Hayes's "Case Closed" raises new questions about Iraq's relationship with al Qaeda—a relationship that only Hayes seems to be covering, with any diligence, anyway, at the moment (Nov. 24). Even if bin Laden had qualms about Saddam Hussein, all I have read about his deputy Ayman al Zawahiri suggests he would have no reservations about doing whatever it took to further his war against America and Israel.

In any case, there is ample evidence of a Saddam-al Qaeda connection, however tenuous. Just take this one example, pulled from another Hayes story, "Fair, Balanced, and Bought" (The Daily Standard May 28): "According to one document, authored by an Iraqi operative working in the regime's embassy in Qatar, an Al Jazeera employee Iraqi intelligence referred to as 'Jazeera 2' passed letters from Osama bin Laden to Saddam Hussein."

If, indeed, an Al Jazeera employee was acting as a courier between Saddam and Osama bin Laden, not only would it explain Al Jazeera's curious war coverage, but it would also bolster the United States and Britain's case to go to war in the first place.

Brenda Speelziek
Ontario, Canada

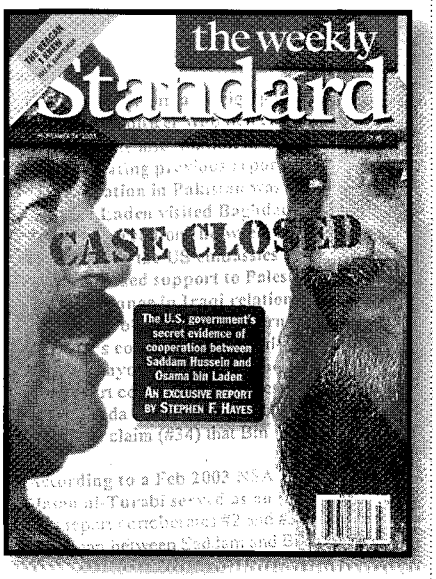
Why have major media outlets ignored Stephen F. Hayes's riveting "Case Closed"? If it weren't for the Fox News Channel, I would not have known about the leaked Senate Intelligence Committee memo. My local paper, the *Virginian-Pilot*, totally missed The Weekly Standard's scoop.

To make matters worse, the Bush White House ignored, nay, even disputed (via the Pentagon's press release on Saturday, Nov. 15) "Case Closed." If the White House really had the goods on Saddam's relationship with al Qaeda, you would think they would trumpet it. But, then again, these are strange times we are living in.

Barry Koch
Virginia Beach, VA

Thanks to Stephen F. Hayes for reporting on the evidence behind the administration's claim that Saddam and al Qaeda were in cahoots. This is information the American people should have been exposed to before the U.S. invasion of Iraq, at a cost of billions of dollars and thousands of lives. But better late than never. One hopes that Hayes's reporting will provide the "missing link" between Saddam and al Qaeda, so central to discussions over the validity of the Iraq war.

Of course, Feith's memo can potentially cut either way. Like all documents and assertions used to justify war, this latest should be examined thoroughly by all parties before gaining widespread acceptance. If it holds up, fantastic—some Americans' nagging consciences will be relieved. If, though, it proves to be a false or "spun-up" document, put out to bolster an incumbent president's popularity and credibility, then it will do little to bolster the case for war. From the media up to the highest levels of the administration, all need to know that Americans will accept nothing less than the truth.



Greg Ice
Santa Rosa, CA

Red in the Face

I can return Victor Navasky's half-hearted compliment, included in his response to my Nov. 17 review, "Invincible Ignorance," by saying that he is not a half-bad nonfiction writer indulging a lifelong romance with what the Communists used to call "progressive humanity" ("Red Rage," Dec. 1). He defends the indefensible, but cleverly, more so than the foremost Soviet apologist who preceded him, the unctuous Cedric Belfrage, editor of the late, despicable *National Guardian*. That newspaper, the voice of "progressive" America, endlessly proclaimed the innocence of the Rosenbergs and Alger Hiss and the nonexistence of Soviet espionage. (Their reasoning: It was banned by the Soviet constitution.) Alas, and I'm not accusing poor Victor of this, Belfrage turned out to be a Soviet agent himself.

In his response, Navasky leaves out part of what he wrote in the *Nation* in its July 18, 2001, issue. Before stating "there un-doubtedly were bona fide espionage agents on both sides," he wrote that "There were a lot of exchanges of information among people of good will . . . most of whom were patriots. Most of these exchanges were innocent and were within the law. Some were innocent but nevertheless were in technical violation of the law." What exchanges? There weren't any. Everything went from the United States to the Soviet Union. Nothing came from them to us. There were no American spies in the USSR in the 1930s and 1940s. The first American spy agency in World War II was the OSS. As a matter of policy they did not place a single agent in the Soviet Union. Nothing the United States did in that era has any resemblance to the Soviet intelligence offensive against the United States up to the end of World War II. After World War II, we did make an effort.

Victor is an eel-like writer whose escape route is shrinking; his defense of the innocence of Soviet spies has narrowed down to Alger Hiss. But his essential message is always the same: that the real enemy is the United States. And that is truly fantasy of the most pernicious kind.

David Evanier
Brooklyn, NY

Unfit to Print

I applaud your innovation to The Scrapbook: Publishing the unpublished letters to the editor of the *New York Times* is an act of courage ("The Scrapbook," Nov. 24). Kicking things off

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with Joe Hootman's clever letter on "historically white denominations" was a real treat.

However, unlike THE SCRAPBOOK, I can understand why the *Times* refused to print Hootman's missive. For one thing, the letter wittily undresses the Gray Lady; for another, it is bitingly clever; and for another, it *isn't* fiction.

BRYAN TAPLITS
Cincinnati, OH

GIDDINESS AS USUAL

IN "AGAINST GIDDINESS," Fred Barnes forgot a glaring problem with the Bush administration's current strategy, not only for reelection but also for effective governance: communicating clearly with voters (Nov. 24).

Ronald Reagan understood the importance of communication so well that he is still known today as the "Great Communicator." Whenever the Democratic party tried to sell left-wing cant to the American people as "mainstream views," the Gipper took his message of freedom directly to the people.

On Iraq, the president is missing a chance to make an appeal to the people who will decide his reelection in 2004. He should state the incontrovertible facts which led to his decision to invade Iraq. Then he should state what we are doing and hope to do in Iraq in plain language.

Bush's recent speeches before the National Endowment for Democracy and the Institute for International Strategic Studies in London have been praised, and rightly so. But Reagan had a better idea. When he needed to challenge his adversaries—Gorbachev, say, or Tip O'Neill—he did so using clear word-pictures and anecdotes that everyone could understand. And, more often than not, Reagan prevailed.

VANCE FRICKEY
Denver, CO

IN HIS EDITORIAL "Against Giddiness," Fred Barnes gave several examples of things that George W. Bush needs to watch out for as he begins his reelection campaign. One thing, however, was missing from Barnes's analysis: the prospect for reenactment of the Brady Bill. This law had a 10-year sunset provision when it was first enacted, and is due to expire in September 2004. Bush would most likely sign it if it came to his desk. This would hurt the president.

Gun owners are mindful that it was George H.W. Bush who started the current round of gun control laws, and that it was another Republican, Senator Arlen Specter, who was crucial to the adoption of the Brady Bill. Bush "41" lost his reelection bid in 1992, and Specter faces a primary challenge next year. Gun owners have long memories.

JIM DORAN
Malabar, FL

PARTY HEARTY

FRED BARNES'S "Realignment, Cont." concluded by saying that the 14-point Democratic edge in voter registration in Kentucky didn't help the Democrats in the recent gubernatorial election here (Nov. 17).

As a registered Democrat, I've been part of this edge for 40 years. It isn't laziness that prevents us from switching. It's just that there are never any contests in the Republican primaries. Rest assured, when November comes around we show our true colors.

PEGGY SPENCER
Cox's Creek, KY

DANGEROUS MINDS

"MIND GAMES," by Sally Satel and Keith Humphreys (Oct. 13), advised legislators who write the "parity" laws for mental health not to cover all mental disorders. In doing so, the authors exposed only one of the problems with insuring mental health. Advocating legislation that can pick and choose medical disorders is risky business indeed.

Epidemiological surveys performed using DSM criteria show that up to 50 percent of the American population has one or more psychiatric diagnoses in a year. Pharmaceutical companies embrace this, seeing expanding markets, whereas the insurance industry sees mounting risks. American psychiatry, no doubt, remains "concerned." But nobody will argue that this finding does not accurately reflect the state of the art for detecting mental disorders.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual approach to psychiatric diagnosis has triumphed since its introduction almost 30 years ago. A thoroughly American conception, DSM is democratic, egalitarian, and patient (or consumer) oriented, substituting a computer friendly checklist approach for the fuzzy, obscure, and elite formulations of the past. But the categories of illness have proliferated to the point that the "seriously" sick can often get lumped in with the fairly well.

Although it is tempting to wish that parity can be achieved by identifying truly needy classes of patients, the present DSM system has not proved to be a good instrument for such purposes. American psychiatry and science, not government, ought to take on the task of reordering the mental diagnostic rules. A better diagnostic system would recognize the disparity of outcome across diagnoses, and find those that allow for accurate treatment planning. Why not let the clinicians and scientists have a go at improving things before the legislature moves in?

LAURENS D. YOUNG
Mequon, WI

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the weekly Standard

About That Memo . . .

On the surface, it might seem like a simple case of media bias. In the November 24, 2003, WEEKLY STANDARD, Stephen F. Hayes summarized and quoted at length a recent, secret Pentagon memo to the Senate Intelligence Committee. The memo laid out—in 50 bullet points, over 16 pages—the relationship between Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. Much of the intelligence in the memo was detailed and appeared to be well-sourced and well-corroborated.

The story generated lots of discussion on talk radio and on the Internet, but the establishment media did their best to take a pass. The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* wrote brief articles about the memo that focused as much on the alleged "leak" of the information as they did on the substance of the intelligence. *Newsweek*, in an article on its website, misreported several important elements of the memo and dismissed the article as "hype." As we went to press, the memo had received nary a mention on the major broadcast networks.

Slate columnist Jack Shafer, who declares himself agnostic on the substance of the memo, scolded the media for their stubborn resistance to covering the story: "A classified memo by a top Pentagon official written at Senate committee request and containing intelligence about scores of intelligence reports might spell news to you or me." But "the mainstream press has largely ignored Hayes's piece. What's keeping the pack from tearing Hayes's story to shreds, from building on it or at least exploiting the secret document from which Hayes quotes? One possible explanation is that the mainstream press is too invested in its consensus finding that Saddam and Osama *never* teamed up and its almost theological view that Saddam and Osama *couldn't possibly have ever hooked up* because of secular-sacred differences."

Whatever the reason, we're not surprised by bias among the mainstream media. And we rarely complain about it, since we take it for granted. But we do have a complaint about the Bush administration. The administration says, repeatedly, that "Iraq is the central front in the war on terror." They produce a memo for the Senate Intelligence Committee laying out the connections between Osama and Saddam. We obtain the memo, and make public those parts that don't endanger intelligence sources and methods. But now the administration—continuing a pattern of the last several months—shies away from an opportunity to substantiate its own case before the American people and the world.

Within 24 hours of the publication of Hayes's article, the Defense Department released a statement that seemed designed to distance it from the memo written by its third-ranking official, Undersecretary of Defense Douglas J. Feith. The Pentagon statement criticized "news reports" about the memo as "inaccurate." It specified neither any reports nor any alleged errors. In fact, the Pentagon's statement itself contained several mistakes. For example, the Pentagon declared that the memo "was not an analysis of the substantive issue of the relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda, and it drew no conclusions." Not exactly.

Consider the introduction to the relevant part of the Pentagon memo, called "Summary of Body of Intelligence Reporting on Iraq-al Qaeda Contacts (1990-2003)."

Some individuals have argued that the al Qaeda ties to Iraq have not been "proven." The requirement for certainty misses the point. Intelligence assessments are not about prosecutorial proof. They do not require juridical evidence to support them nor the legal standards that are needed in law enforcement. Intelligence assessments examine trends, patterns, capabilities, and intentions. By these criteria, the substantial body of intelligence reporting—for over a decade, from a variety of sources—reflects a pattern of Iraqi support for al Qaeda's activities. The covert nature of the relationship has made it difficult to know the full extent of that support. Al Qaeda's operational security and Iraq's need to cloak its activities have precluded a full appreciation of the relationship. Nonetheless, the following reports clearly indicate that Osama bin Laden did cooperate with Iraq's secular regime despite differences in ideology and religious beliefs in order to advance al Qaeda's objectives and to defeat a common enemy—the U.S.

As it happens, we agree with the conclusions in this analysis; others will disagree. But make no mistake—contrary to what Defense now says—these are conclusions and this is analysis.

All of this leads us to ask several questions. Is the intelligence in the Feith memo inaccurate? If so, why would the Bush administration provide inaccurate intelligence to a Senate panel investigating the possible misuse of intelligence? If not, why is the Bush administration so reluctant to discuss it? White House spokesman Scott McClellan correctly said the next day that "the ties between, or the relationship between Saddam Hussein's regime and al Qaeda were well documented. They were documented by Secretary Powell before the United Nations, back in Feb-

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ruary, I believe. And we have previously talked about those ties that are there." But the administration has been peculiarly timid about talking about those ties again, today.

And the administration's silence on the Feith memo is odd because the reporting it contains seems, as McClellan suggests, mostly to back up allegations that top officials have been making for more than a year. CIA Director George Tenet wrote on October 7, 2002, that his agency had "solid reporting of senior level contacts between Iraq and al Qaeda going back a decade," that the CIA had "credible information" about discussions between Iraq and al Qaeda on "safe haven and reciprocal nonaggression" and "solid evidence of the presence in Iraq of al Qaeda members, including some that have been in Baghdad," and "credible reporting" that "Iraq has provided training to al Qaeda members in the areas of poisons and gases and making conventional bombs."

President Bush made similar charges in a speech on October 8, 2002, in Cincinnati, Ohio:

We know that Iraq and the al Qaeda terrorist network share a common enemy: the United States of America. We know that Iraq and al Qaeda have had high-level contacts that go back a decade. Some al Qaeda leaders who fled Afghanistan went to Iraq. These include one very senior al Qaeda leader who received medical treatment in Baghdad this year, and who has been associated with planning for chemical and biological attacks. We have learned that Iraq has trained al Qaeda members in bomb making and poisons and deadly gases. And we know that after September the 11th Saddam Hussein's regime gleefully celebrated the terrorist attacks on America.

Colin Powell updated the case in his February 5, 2003, presentation to the United Nations Security Council:

Going back to the early and mid-1990s, when bin Laden was based in Sudan, an al Qaeda source tells us that Saddam and bin Laden reached an understanding that al Qaeda would no longer support activities against Baghdad. Early al Qaeda ties were forged by secret, high-level [Iraqi] intelligence service contacts with al Qaeda. . . . We know members of both organizations met repeatedly and have met at least eight times at very senior levels since the early 1990s. In 1996, a foreign security service tells us that bin Laden met with a senior Iraqi intelligence official in Khartoum and later met the director of the Iraqi intelligence service. . . . Iraqis continue to visit bin Laden in his new home in Afghanistan. A senior defector, one of Saddam's former intelligence chiefs in Europe, says Saddam sent his agents to Afghanistan sometime in the mid-1990s, to provide training to al Qaeda members on document forgery. From the late 1990s until 2001, the Iraqi embassy in Pakistan played the role of liaison to the al Qaeda organization.

We believed George Tenet and President Bush and Colin Powell when they made those claims. So why the public silence now, when the administration, as we have discovered, has reiterated its claims to the Senate Intelligence Committee? We're not asking here for a point-by-point confirmation of the Feith memo. We ourselves suspect that some of the 50 items in the memo, on further analysis, may not check out. We're also not suggesting the administration publicly divulge currently relevant intelligence secrets. But why the embarrassed silence about terror ties with a regime that is now, thank heaven, gone?

Perhaps the Bush administration is still spooked by its mishandling of the Niger-uranium-Joe Wilson-State of the Union fiasco earlier this year. Perhaps they didn't want to appear to be exploiting a "leaked" memo. So let us forget about all the water that's under the bridge, and simply pose a few questions to Bush administration officials—questions based on the now revealed portions of the Feith memo, questions to which the American people deserve an answer:

(1) Do you in fact have "credible reporting" about Iraqi training of al Qaeda in "the areas of poisons and gases and making conventional bombs"?

(2) Faruq Hijazi, former deputy director of Iraqi Intelligence, is in U.S. custody. He was allegedly one of the key facilitators of the relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda, and apparently admitted, during a May 2003 custodial interview, meeting with bin Laden in 1994 in Sudan. What else is he saying? Do you believe him? Is there corroborating evidence for this meeting? Is there corroborating evidence for the reports detailed in the memo of 1998-1999 meetings between al Qaeda and Iraqi intelligence in Afghanistan and Pakistan?

(3) The Feith memo refers to "fragmentary evidence" of Iraqi involvement in the bombing of the USS *Cole* in 2000, and possible Iraqi involvement in the 1993 World Trade Center attack. What is this evidence? How persuasive is it?

(4) Ahmed Hikmat Shakir is an Iraqi native who escorted two of the September 11 hijackers to the planning meeting for the attacks in January 2000 in Kuala Lumpur. He got his job at the Kuala Lumpur airport through a contact at the Iraqi embassy, and that person controlled his schedule. During his detention by Jordanian intelligence after September 11, Saddam's regime exerted pressure on the Jordanians for his release. Shakir was set free and fled to Baghdad. What have the Jordanians told you about Iraq's demands that Shakir be released? What have other detainees told you about Shakir's connections to Iraqi intelligence, on the one hand, and to the September 11 hijackers on the other?

(5) The U.S. government has 1,400 people on the ground in Iraq searching for evidence of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program. Is there any similar effort to examine Iraq's ties to al Qaeda? Why not? Wouldn't such an effort give us insight into the nature of the relationship between Baathists and al Qaeda before the war, and into the ongoing fight against al Qaeda today?

We at THE WEEKLY STANDARD have long believed that the war in Iraq was, indeed, central to the broader war on terror. This argument never depended on particular connections of Saddam and al Qaeda, but such connections are certainly relevant. Based on all the evidence we have seen, we believe that such connections existed. Does the Bush administration agree, or doesn't it?

—The Editors

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Hey, Big Spenders!

Under Bush, the era of small government is over.

BY FRED BARNES

WANT TO CURB federal spending? Replace President Bush with a Democrat. This is not entirely a joke. With Republicans in control of the White House and Congress since 2000—except for an interlude in 2001-2002 when Democrats held the Senate—spending has risen at roughly three times the rate of the 1990s when Democrat Bill Clinton was president. Back then, congressional Republicans stymied Democratic spending. Now, Republicans go along with Bush's spending initiatives, while he accedes to theirs. That's the way a governing majority operates.

Conservatives who favor smaller government are upset with Bush. Steve Moore of the Club for Growth says the administration hasn't come to grips with its spending problem. Republican senator John Sununu of New Hampshire believes the surge in federal spending clashes with the concept of limited government embraced by nearly all Republicans. Under Clinton, discretionary spending rose an average of 2.7 percent a year, but in the Bush years it has soared about 8 percent. Total federal spending, which includes entitlements such as Social Security and Medicare, increased 1.7 percent in the Clinton years and just under 6 percent in the three years Bush has shaped the budget. To many conservatives, this trend is inexcusable.

Only, President Bush has an excuse—better yet, a reason—in 9/11 and the war on terrorism. Grant him this and the picture changes dramatically. Minus the additional expenditures for defense and homeland security, spending doesn't look so extravagant. In 2003, discretionary domestic spending rose 5 percent, while defense was up 11 percent and homeland security 85 percent. For 2004, the Office of Management and Budget projects a hike of less than 3 percent in domestic spending and rises of 4 percent in defense and 24 percent in homeland security. The defense number doesn't include "supplemental" spending of an estimated $50 billion in 2004 from the recent $87 billion appropriation for Iraq.

Bush hasn't abandoned spending restraint altogether. His tax cuts eventually may, as former senator Phil Gramm used to put it, "starve the spending." Budget director Josh Bolten says the White House has persuaded Congress to cap 2004 discretionary spending at $786 billion, not counting supplemental appropriations. But at the same time, Bush has promoted a prescription drug entitlement for the elderly priced at $400 billion over 10 years and an energy bill that triples the cost of the measure the president initially proposed. Nonetheless, Bush intervened last week to produce a compromise energy bill—but not a less costly one. And his effort failed, as six Republicans joined Democrats to block the bill in the Senate.

"Nobody was riding herd on the spending issues" in the energy legislation, according to Sununu. As a result, the bill turned into a porkfest that would cost $31 billion in subsidies and tax breaks, making it an instant symbol of government excess and corporate welfare. It would also micromanage parts of the energy industry through federal grants, while earmarking $1 billion for "coastal" programs in Louisiana. The measure would also spend $250 million apiece for such dubious projects as exploration of the "next generation" of lighting and photo-voltaic research. Neither Republican congressional leaders nor the White House did anything to rein in the bill's spending.

Bush had an opportunity last year to draw a limit on spending. The farm bill that reached his desk, drafted by then-Senate majority leader Tom Daschle, increased agricultural subsidies by $73.5 billion. But congressional Republican leaders backed it, and Bush never considered a veto (he has yet to veto a spending bill). Bush's economic adviser at the time, Larry Lindsey, went so far as to write a piece for the *Wall Street Journal* lauding the measure for meeting "the needs of farmers." Had Bush vetoed the bill, says Sununu, it "would have sent a very important message to everyone" on holding down spending.

Not that Bush doesn't routinely advocate fiscal conservatism. Last May, he insisted the best way to reduce the budget deficit is by controlling spending, not raising taxes. "It's to send clear priorities and say to the Congress, here are the guidelines, here's what we expect you to honor and that is, in this case, no more than 4 percent increase in discretionary spending," he said. "In other words, there needs to be fiscal sanity in Washington."

To meet the 4-percent goal, the president might have pushed for cuts

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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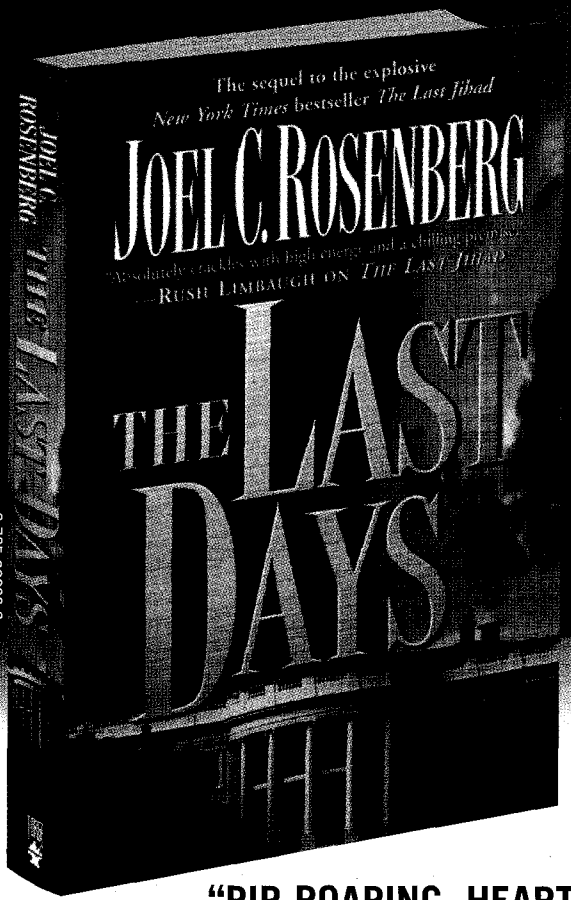

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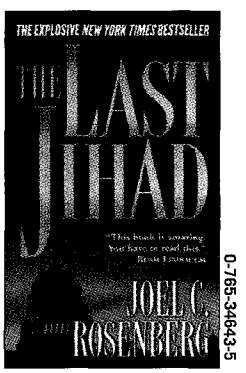

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in domestic social programs to help offset spending hikes in defense and homeland security. He didn't. The White House spins the spending on antiterrorist efforts and the war in Iraq as "one-time spending," a mere blip and not a recurring threat to the 4-percent goal.

Bush faces two more factors that conflict with spending restraint—and both are partly of his own making. One is his strategy for reelection in 2004: lock up the conservative base and go after the political center. His tax cuts, conservative values, and strong position on national security appeal to his base. But spending programs—a prescription drug benefit, energy subsidies, a lavish farm bill—are the easiest way to woo swing voters and win swing states.

The other factor is the governing majority Bush sits atop. Governing majorities can't stand still. Nor can they merely slash spending and reduce the size of government. To remain in power, they have to act, legislate, cope with inevitable national problems. That's what the public expects. Sure, if Democrats manage to send Bush an expensive energy bill, he'll have no qualms vetoing it. But veto a Republican bill that boosts Republican-leaning constituencies linked with his governing majority and affecting voter sentiment in key states? No way. Republican spending gets a pass, a cheer even.

The White House is feeling the pain of small government conservatives. One indication is the stress Bush aides put on the lowest spending figure, the one that leaves out defense, homeland security, and supplemental expenditures. Another is the White House's eagerness for a budget fight with Congress next year, with Bush leading the spend-less side. And the president intends to tout Social Security reform in his reelection campaign, arguing among other things that it's the only way to stem out-of-control spending on benefits. Will this strategy appease conservatives and thwart Democratic attempts to characterize him as fiscally reckless? Probably. ♦

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George W. Bush, Arm-Twister

How the president won his Medicare bill.

BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

ON NOVEMBER 22, sometime around 5 A.M., President Bush called Rep. Steve Chabot to talk about drugs. About two hours earlier, Chabot, a conservative Republican from Cincinnati, had cast his vote against the 681-page Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act of 2003, under which Medicare, the government's health care program for the elderly, would subsidize prescription drug coverage for seniors. The bill, the largest overhaul of Medicare since its inception in 1965, was one of the president's top political priorities. Bush wanted Chabot to change his vote. "I told him that I appreciated his call," Chabot said last week. "But there were several concerns I had with the bill, and I had made up my mind to vote no."

Others had also made up their minds. Tom Feeney, a freshman Republican from Florida, voted "no" on the legislation shortly after 3 A.M. Saturday. He, too, got a call from the president. "Mr. President," Feeney told Bush, "I did not come to Washington to expand government."

Whereupon Bush brusquely replied, "Neither did I . . . *Pal.*" (Feeney kept his vote "no.")

Bush's calls were part of a last-ditch effort by the administration and the House GOP leadership to win the support of recalcitrant conservative legislators. Bush may have failed to persuade Chabot, Feeney, and others, but in the end the Medicare legislation passed the House 220 to 215, and the president won a major political victory.

Matthew Continetti is an editorial assistant at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

It wasn't easy. For 2 hours and 36 minutes of the 2 hour and 51 minute vote, the Medicare bill was *losing*, 216 to 218. And, if you listen to members of the House leadership, it was a small group of House conservatives who were behind those 2 hours and 50 minutes of imminent defeat. When the last vote was tallied at 5:51 A.M., almost 3 hours after voting began, some 25 GOP congressmen had voted against the prescription drug benefit. (Last week, the Senate approved the Medicare bill 54 to 44, with 9 GOP senators voting "no.")

But the vote wasn't easy for the GOP dissenters, either. "The norm has been long established and clear," wrote congressional scholar Norman Ornstein in the *Washington Post*: "Fifteen minutes is the voting time." The House Republican leadership has extended the 15-minute limit on over a dozen occasions since 1994, but, Ornstein argues, the Medicare roll call vote was a first: Over the course of the almost three-hour long vote—the longest vote in the history of the House—dissenting conservative Republicans were subject to arm-twisting, brow-beating, and outright threats.

Those who stuck around, that is. Jerry Moran, a Republican from Kansas, voted "no," and then left for the gym. But soon after Moran and a few others escaped, the Republican leadership made sure the House chamber's exits were blocked. The rebel conservatives hung around in a group towards the back of the chamber, seeking strength in numbers. Says one of them, Colorado Republican Tom Tancredo, "If the leadership ever got you alone, you were in trouble."

Nick Smith, for example. Smith, a six-term Michigan Republican who plans to retire next year, sat alone on the floor after casting his "no" vote. He says he stayed on the floor out of duty. "I had the feeling that, since I voted against the leadership, I would sit there and take the punishment," he says. "But I won't sit out there again." Smith's punishment was being told his "no" vote meant his son Chris wouldn't have the party's support when he tries to take over Smith's district in 2004.

Rep. John Shadegg of Arizona, who came to Congress as part of the 1994 Gingrich revolution, was another loner. He cast his "no" vote, and then kept to himself, save for a series of conversations with Tommy Thompson, the secretary of health and human services, who had come to the Capitol to spend the vote lobbying members on the floor, despite a tradition of keeping the House floor off limits to outsiders. ("Another shameful first," wrote Ornstein.) "Thompson listened thoughtfully to my criticisms," Shadegg told me. "We shook hands several times on the House floor. He clearly thought this was a good bill." Shadegg didn't.

House conservatives felt pressure to vote for the bill in other ways. Rep. Jim DeMint, a South Carolina Republican who is running for Fritz Hollings's Senate seat next year, got calls from campaign donors on Saturday morning urging him to vote for prescription drug coverage. DeMint still voted "no." On November 20, a few days before the House vote, the National Right to Life Committee announced that it would score the Medicare vote as a pro-life issue. There was "uniform outrage" at the announcement among congressional conservatives, says one House aide.

The slyest instance of politicking was also the most shameless, and the most successful. As the vote stretched on and on into the morning hours, a rumor began circulating among House Republicans that, if the compromise Medicare reform package failed, Democrats, under the legislative procedure known as a "discharge petition," would urge a vote

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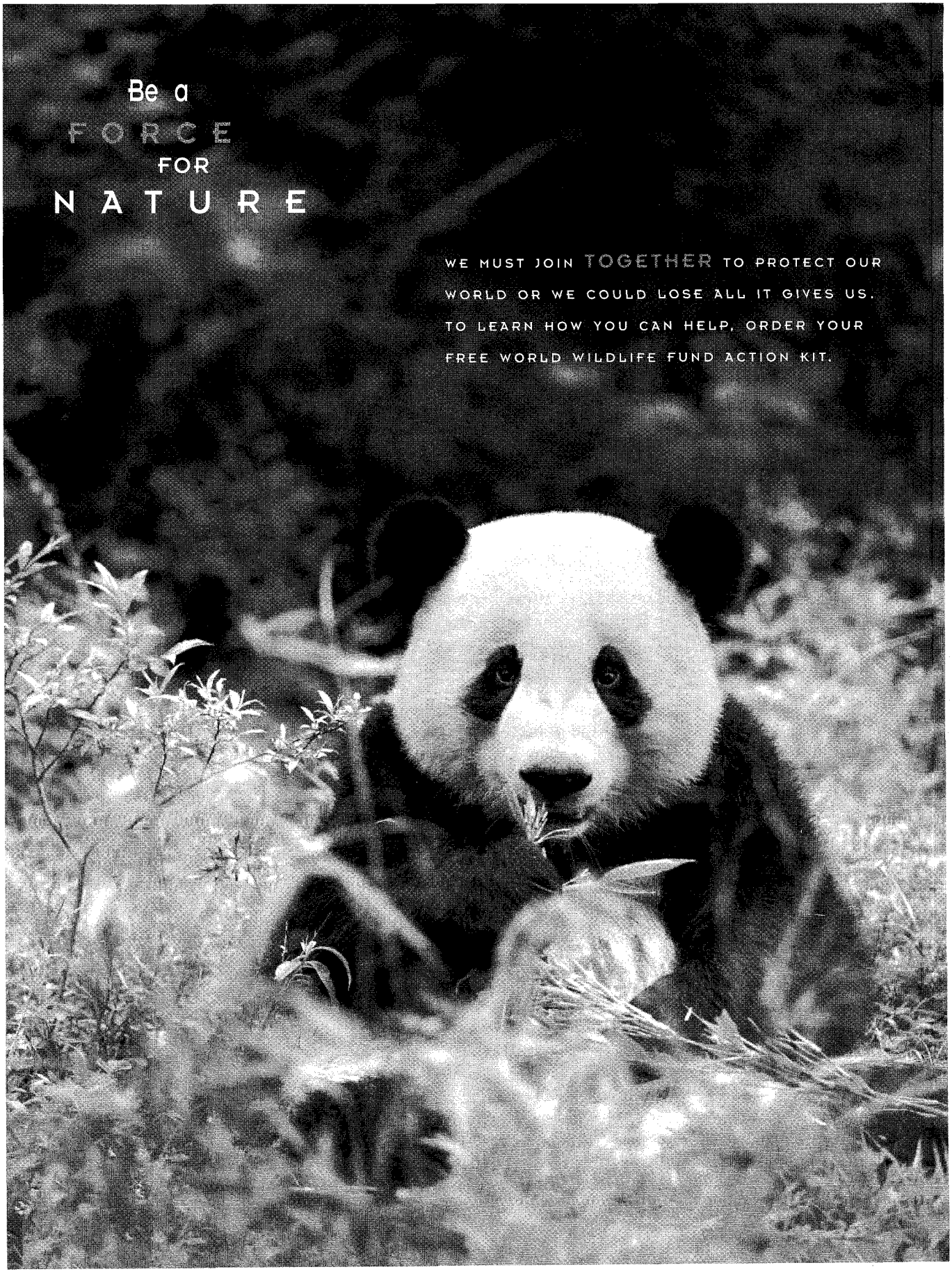

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on their own, more expensive, bill.

Said rumor quickly reached the ears of Idaho's C.L. "Butch" Otter and Arizona's Trent Franks, the squishiest of the House Republican rebels. Both of whom, upon hearing the rumor, switched their votes to "yes," ensuring victory for the House leadership and President Bush. Whether or not there was a serious plan among Democrats to use a discharge petition hasn't been determined, but after the vote, a senior House GOP aide told the *Washington Post* that the threat was "concocted" by the House leadership to "pry loose" stubborn conservatives. It worked.

Last week, the dissenting congressmen spent a lot of time talking about their frustrations with the Republican governing majority. "I didn't come to Congress to be an obstructionist," says Tancredo. He muses that "just once" he'd like to vote "yes" on an HR 1 bill (the first bill introduced during a House term and normally a leadership priority): "The last HR 1 was No Child Left Behind. That was big government in education. Now it's big government in health care."

"I am gravely concerned about [the Medicare vote]," says Shadegg. "It has serious implications for conservatives. It's going to be very hard and ugly: Under what set of circumstances can conservatives challenge their leaders?"

One such circumstance was the bankruptcy reform bill, which the House passed in July 2002. Shadegg points out that House conservatives were able to eliminate pro-choice provisions in the bill, inserted by New York senator Charles Schumer—provisions that the House leadership was willing to live with. The difference between the bankruptcy bill and prescription drugs, of course, is that the president has made a prescription drug benefit a central part of his reelection campaign.

Some are less sanguine about the ability of House conservatives to influence the leadership. "We're just going to have to fight for our principles," sighs Steve Chabot. "We're going to win some, we're going to lose some." He pauses. "Hopefully, we'll win more than we lose." ♦

The Secret to Homeland Security

Put the civilians back into civil defense.

BY ELI LEHRER

LESS THAN AN HOUR after hijacked jetliners hit the World Trade Center towers on September 11, 2001, the Coast Guard called "all available boats" to the New York City waterfront. Fishing trawlers, ferries, cargo ships, and luxury yachts came in droves. By day's end, over 300,000 people had left the island of Manhattan by boat. As the South Street Seaport Museum's history of the evacuation, "All Available Boats," makes clear, without this maritime evacuation, many more uninjured survivors would have spent a difficult night in the dark, scary, and desolate city. The civilian-led evacuation of lower Manhattan thus stands as a shining example of how ordinary citizens can help out when things get bad.

Civilian involvement in disaster response, called civil defense, could play a major role in making America safer. To date, however, homeland security efforts have neglected this potential asset.

Civil defense is eminently possible. During a disaster—from a terrorist attack to a major storm—stores and offices close and, as a result, a massive surplus labor pool becomes available. And people want to help. In the wake of 9/11, for example, blood donations soared all across the country even though local reserves in New York and Washington, D.C., were more than adequate to treat survivors. New York City and Arlington, Virginia, got so many free supplies that local governments asked citizens to stop sending gifts after just a few days.

Yet, since 9/11, government agencies and emergency workers have expressed little interest in anything other than a professional-only response to future disasters. The Centers for Disease Control's strategy for responding to smallpox outbreaks, for example, assumes that only "public health and health care professionals" will administer vaccines. The nation's corps of police volunteers has shrunk slightly since 9/11 as more extensive background checks have weeded out potential "security risks" who want to take simple crime reports, direct traffic, and file papers.

It doesn't need to be this way. An hour's training can teach nearly anyone how to board up a window or run a water purifier. Giving vaccinations, administering first aid, directing traffic, and taking simple crime reports require only a bit more training. Indeed, lots of the help needed in a disaster—from working in a soup kitchen to stacking sandbags—requires no special skills at all. America also has a deep well of excess talent. Retired military and law enforcement personnel would likely jump at the chance to work as disaster-response reservists, but existing police reserve programs typically require candidates to complete full-time, six-month training courses. If medical resources were stretched, likewise, dentists, chiropractors, and even athletic trainers could all make themselves very useful in providing emergency medical care. With some investment, local governments could even revive the World War II-era system of civil defense war-

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AP/Wide World Photos / Matt Moyer

The boats that helped evacuate Manhattan on 9/11 show the contribution citizen volunteers can make in a crisis.

dens: people on each block assigned to help organize evacuations, dispense supplies, and direct emergency workers to those who need extra assistance. Given a role and a little training, in other words, nearly everyone who wanted to help out in a disaster could contribute.

The United States once had a very good civil defense network. Before the mid-1970s, official federal policies mandated that Civil Defense Councils, mostly made up of community leaders from outside the government, take the lead in responding to disasters. In 1960, the United States had over 3,500 such councils. Civilians did a fine job working in emergency shelters, providing first aid, writing disaster management plans, and directing evacuations. In 1955, a civilian-led Operation Alert air raid drill successfully evacuated Times Square during the lunch hour. More prosaic evacuation efforts saved thousands of lives when storms and hurricanes battered American cities and towns. But federal, state, and local agencies coordinated their disaster-response efforts so poorly that local civil defense leaders often received contradictory information.

However, civil defense officials, particularly at the federal level, acted foolishly at times: A 1961 effort to establish a national fallout shelter network stocked storage rooms and workplace supply closets with two-weeks' worth of food, water, and even cosmetics, so citizens would have somewhere to stay in the event of a nuclear war. The effort never received full funding and eventually died of its own stupidity. As détente and America's eventual Cold War victory calmed notions of massive nuclear attacks, the dwindling few who remained involved in civil defense earned a not-wholly-undeserved reputation as paranoid survivalists.

Sick of a confused and often irrelevant message from above, local governments began demanding change at the federal level. In response to a 1979 petition from the National Governors' Association, Jimmy Carter merged the Department of Defense's Civil Preparedness Agency with over 100 disaster-response programs elsewhere in the federal government to create the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). By the mid-1980s, states, counties, and cities had copied this approach. In fits and starts, emergency management became a profession in its own right. By the numbers, professionalized disaster management proved an enormous success. In 1969, for example, over 250 people died when Hurricane Camille made landfall along the Gulf Coast. When Hurricane Isabel blasted the much more heavily populated Washington, D.C., area earlier this year, only 9 perished.

As professionals took over disaster response, civil defense withered away. The Citizen Corps Councils, successor to the Civil Defense Councils, are supposed to train ordinary citizens in emergency response. But the program, remodeled after 9/11, appears almost stillborn. Total funding for Citizen

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Corps, $35 million, stands at less than one tenth the real-dollar amount spent on Civil Defense Councils in 1960. The new councils have not even spread to major cities like Chicago, St. Louis, and San Diego. Arlington, Virginia, which has received over $20 million in homeland security money (the most per capita in the country), has a Citizen Corps Council made up of community leaders who meet regularly and provide substantive guidance to professional emergency planners. Even in Arlington, however, the council's only public program so far has been a first aid training class that served 100 of the 300 people who signed up.

America responds best to disasters when police, firefighters, paramedics, nurses, doctors, and emergency managers take the lead. America's quest to professionalize disaster response, however, has come at the cost of leaving ordinary citizens out of the loop when they want to help. An already good system would become better if it made room for them. ♦

All in the Family Research Council

Mr. Perkins comes to Washington.

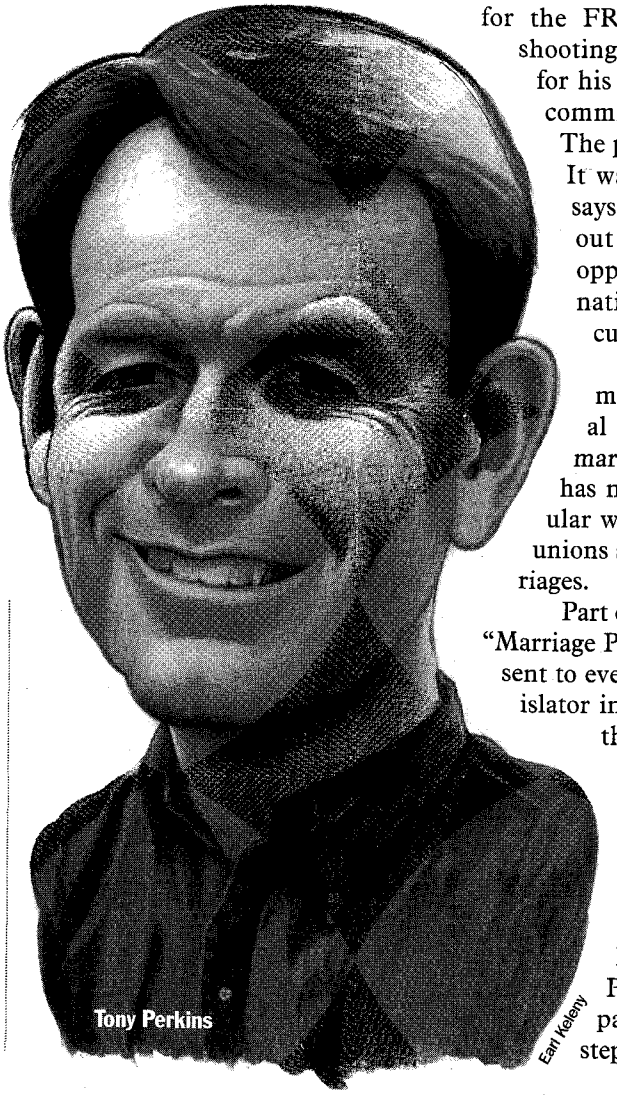
BY RACHEL DICARLO

"WE'RE IN REBUILDING mode," says Tony Perkins, the new president of the Family Research Council. "We're planning on bringing back the FRC."

Describing himself as a "diplomat" and a "risk-taker," Perkins, a former Louisiana legislator, says he means to restore the FRC to the position of influence it enjoyed as a pro-family lobbying force in Washington under the leadership of Gary Bauer, who left to run for president in 2000.

This will not be easy. Perkins has no Washington experience and knows few of the players inside the Beltway. Bauer had served in the Reagan administration, first in the Education Department, then as White House domestic policy chief. When he took over the FRC in 1990, Bauer was a widely known political figure often seen on TV news shows.

Rachel DiCarlo is an editorial assistant at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.



Tony Perkins

Earl Keleny

Perkins has ambitious plans. He wants to raise the organization's profile, he says, by making it more responsive to the media on issues in the news, like gay marriage and abortion. He also means to develop a greater national presence. Perkins plans a bus tour around the country next summer, holding issue-related events he hopes will be covered by the local media.

And Perkins aims to reestablish a strong relationship with Focus on the Family, the Colorado-based pro-family media empire from which the FRC spun off in 1983. Perkins says he speaks with Focus on the Family president James Dobson almost every day. He sees Dobson's half-hour radio show, broadcast daily on over 2,000 stations nationwide, as "an avenue to reach people."

At the time Perkins was tapped for the FRC, in August, he was shooting television commercials for his campaign for insurance commissioner in Louisiana. The polls showed him ahead. It was a tough decision, he says, but he decided to bow out of the race for the opportunity to address a national audience on big cultural issues.

Center-stage at the moment is a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage. Though the FRC has not endorsed any particular wording, it opposes civil unions as well as same-sex marriages.

Part of its lobbying effort is a "Marriage Protection Pledge" being sent to every state and federal legislator in the country. It affirms that marriage, "whether entered into within or outside of the United States, shall consist of the legal union of one man and one woman." So far, about 100 legislators have signed, Perkins says, and the pace of signatures has stepped up since the recent

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court ruling in Massachusetts allowing same-sex marriages.

Other priority issues Perkins lists are greater latitude for prayer in public schools, a ban on late-term abortions, and judicial overreach. Such concerns have preoccupied him throughout his years in government.

Elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives in 1995, Perkins authored the nation's first "covenant marriage" law. Couples who choose to enter a covenant marriage commit themselves to premarital counseling and, in case of marital breakdown, additional counseling before divorce. Although seen at the time as a promising means of discouraging divorce, covenant marriage hasn't really taken off. Only a tiny fraction of Louisiana couples chose it in 1998, the last year for which the state Vital Records Registry has posted statistics, and Arizona and Arkansas were the only states to follow suit.

Perkins also championed a law requiring state agencies to consider the impact their regulations have on families. Another of his bills, passed in 1999, encouraged prisons to make available to inmates—at no cost to taxpayers—faith-based activities designed to help them adjust to incarceration. Perkins credits this legislation with a significant drop in recidivism in Louisiana.

In 2002, Perkins kept a pledge to serve only two terms in the legislature and mounted an unsuccessful campaign for U.S. Senate.

But then, his career has never been entirely predictable. His public service began with several stints in the Marines and included a spell as a policeman. He was in the Marine Corps reserves for two years while studying at Louisiana State University, then ran out of money and reenlisted full time until he could afford to finish his degree, at Liberty University. He joined up once more in 1990 to serve in the Gulf War, but was assigned to work at the State Department.

Perkins's wife and their four children will soon join him in Washington. They come to the capital at a time when family issues are as prominent as ever, but the politics surrounding them have changed. With a Republican Congress and a president in the White House who willingly signed a ban on partial-birth abortion and strongly opposes redefining marriage, even an outsider like Perkins may be able to accomplish a good deal. ♦

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The Decline of France

And the rise of an Islamist-leftist alliance.

By Christopher Caldwell

Paris

Much of present-day French politics springs from the panic of April 21, 2002, when Jean-Marie Le Pen's fascistic National Front outpolled the ruling Socialist party to finish second in the opening round of France's presidential elections. Jacques Chirac, of course, easily won reelection two weeks later, with 82 percent of the vote, by rallying the entire *left* around his moderate-right party. But the first order of business for Chirac's prime minister, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, was to reassure voters that he had taken full account of what a close call it had been for France. "If in 200 days we have not seen real change," he said, "the risks of tension in this society will be high."

If the 2002 elections were a wake-up call, then France has slept through it. Today, Chirac's popularity is plummeting and Raffarin's job hangs by a thread. On the day the United States launched its war in Iraq last March, Chirac had a 74 percent approval rating, while Raffarin's stood at 58. Today, Chirac is at 47 and falling, while Raffarin is at 33. Their problem is partly that they knuckled under to union protests last spring during a halting and overdue attempt to restrain public employees' privileges. It is partly that they mishandled last summer's heat wave, which saw 15,000 more deaths than would be expected according to actuarial tables. (Most were old people, ditched by their families over summer vacations prolonged absurdly by generous social legislation. The great indignity of the heat wave was thus that it reminded the French what a non-familial, consumerist, rootless, "American" society they have become.) It is partly that Chirac and Raffarin have squandered their mandate on nugatory issues, from their campaign against reckless driving to a "war on tobacco." (The latter is causing problems of public order, too, as smokers, incredulous at the near-doubled price of cigarettes, assault tobacconists and steal merchandise.)

What made this inaction possible is that the government *seemed* to have an important project over the last 18 months—the exhilarating task of taming (if only oratorically) American military hubris. Certainly, France had some legitimate points. An argument can be made that America's "Axis of Evil" rhetoric, far from winning respect from rogue states, led them to accelerate their nuclear programs. The same goes for France's warnings about avoiding a "clash of civilizations" between Islam and the West. While America believed it was *avoiding* a clash of civilizations—fighting our enemies in the Islamic world without fighting our friends—drawing such distinctions may be beyond the capacity of most of the Muslims Washington sought to help. Avoiding a clash of civilizations thus demanded an explication not only of our war aims but of our Western way of life, which in turn requires more rhetorical sophistication than this American administration has at its disposal.

But all this was true only before the beginning of the year. Thereafter, French advice gave way to playing to the gallery, as the country sought to win the applause of violent barbarians by taking potshots at its most important democratic ally. French opposition to the war was unanimous. The war was supported publicly by about four intellectuals and three politicians. Some opposition was measured, but the tone of most of it can be seen in the broadsides launched by French thinkers since the war: The philosopher Tzvetan Todorov, in *The New World Disorder*, alleges that "those occidental ayatollahs who are the directors of the major media launch *fatwas* against certain public figures who express their disapproval of the war"—this while Michael Moore is the best-selling nonfiction writer in France and Paul Krugman is perhaps the most widely read columnist in the world. The Franco-American Harvard professor Stanley Hoffman, who recently published a collection of interviews called *A Truly Imperial America?*, believes the *New York Times* helped squelch the efforts of the French embassy to reveal a campaign of disinformation

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being spread by administration sources—this despite the seeming identicality of that paper's antiwar position to France's. *Nouvel Observateur* editor Jacques Julliard, in *Rupture in Civilization*, expresses his conviction that the real target of America's National Security Strategy—which aims to preempt emerging threats—is not Iran or North Korea but *Europe*. He adds that "the principle of preventive war leads to the destruction of all international law." Julliard favored NATO's war on Serbia, however, which was carried out without U.N. sanction. That's because "the veto then feared in the security council, that of Russia, was more formal than real, inspired as it was by the traditional solidarity with fellow Slavs, rather than by a real political design." France, it appears, is the only U.N. member that can threaten a "real" veto.

So intemperate is the anti-Americanism in the literary hackwork done since the war that one could be forgiven for assuming its purpose is more to palliate French anxieties than to correct American mistakes.

Tariq Ramadan

EFE Photos / Albert Olive

France Falling

When France's own problems are mentioned in public, the reaction is electric. The hot book in France just now is *La France qui tombe* ("France Falling") by the lawyer and political scientist Nicolas Baverez (which was first published as an essay in the prestigious quarterly *Commentaire* last spring). Baverez—who opposed the American invasion of Iraq in a clear-eyed way—blames France's current predicament on the country's preference for stabilizing its institutions over adjusting to the world as it is. This is not a momentary loss of will but a tendency that has been entrenched in French culture since the Industrial Revolution, and it leaves France in "undeniable decline, even in the context of a Europe that is itself decadent."

Legislation passed by the Socialist government in 1998—amidst a great deal of continental philosophizing about "the end of work"—produced a statutory work week of 35 hours. Baverez keenly notes that in the 1930s, France's left-wing Popular Front passed a similar *réduction du temps de travail*. Indeed, its association with the Popular Front gave a powerful boost to the 35-hour work week during the debates five years ago. (The otherwise admirable tendency of the French to root for underdogs has led them to look at the Popular Front's defeat at the hands of domestic—and later foreign—fascism as evidence of its superior morality, not of its inferior strength.)

The short week was meant to spread limited jobs around; it wound up doing the opposite, serving as what Baverez calls a "weapon of mass destruction for industrial production and employment." Today France has the highest youth unemployment in Europe, at 26 percent; only 37 percent of its over-55 population works, a world low. Its employment rate of 58 percent is at the bottom of the developed world. (The figure is 62 percent in the European Union and 75 percent in the United States.) And this grim employment picture is worsened—some would even say *caused*—by a political inequity. Over the past decade, public-sector employees have been able to enrich themselves in ways that private-sector ones cannot. Government employees can retire after 37.5 years on the job, versus 40 for private workers; they get 75 percent of their salary as a pension, versus 62 percent in the private sector; and the salary in this calculation is based on the best-paid six months for government workers, versus an average of their last 25 years for workers in private industry. So the latter wind up subsidizing the former.

France's decline on the foreign-policy stage has the same root cause, Baverez thinks: a desperate, retrograde clutching at institutions that no longer serve their original purpose. Nostalgic for the bipolar confrontation of the Cold War—not just because it was stable but also because it provided a context in which France could leverage its international power—France is stuck in the 1960s. It has shown "reserve" towards the new democracies of Eastern Europe, from its early opposition to German reunification to President Chirac's condemnation of America's East European allies last spring as "not very well brought up." (Must have been that Communist education.)

Foreign minister Dominique de Villepin is said to have responded privately to Baverez's critique by saying that France was living out "not decline but destiny" (*pas le déclin, le destin*, in the original Jesse Jackson–esque French).

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But however ardently it may yearn for an independent European military, France doesn't have the means to produce or lead one; its hefty recent increases in its military budget are largely devoted to maintaining the country's small independent nuclear deterrent.

"Male, Female, Other"

France will not be able to address these problems at its leisure. While the country and its leaders have been spinning theories about globalization and American hegemony, a fresh problem has arisen—the resurrection of a hard left. In mid-November, the second annual European Social Forum was held in three Communist-controlled suburbs around Paris. With 55 plenary sessions and 250 seminars, the Forum gathered the losers of postmodernity under the banner of opposition to global capitalism.

With its roots in the World Social Forums held annually in Porto Alegre, Brazil, this European social movement has taken strong root in France, Spain, and Italy. Its motto—"Another world is possible"—promises a Marxist utopia with no program for getting there. Unlike Soviet communism, it offers little mystery and enigma—it's a nullity wrapped in a zero concealed in a nothing. In a certain light, it appears thoroughly ridiculous. Its adherents will tell you with a straight face that they seek a "Third Way" between Osama bin Laden and George W. Bush. When you sign up for a press pass to the ESF, you're asked to check, under "gender," either "*Homme*," "*Femme*," or "*Autre*." What's more, as with many such movements, you cannot study it up close without risking death by boredom. Even Bernard Cassen, spokesman for one of the organizing groups, tells reporters: "From one forum to the next, we're always kind of repeating the same thing, and we never arrive at anything concrete. We can't go on this way." According to Cassen, the "main weakness" of the Forums is that they leave the working classes cold.

But on another level, there is nothing ridiculous about these people at all. Few political parties could gather 50,000 people for several days of meetings as the Forum did. Fewer still could draw 200,000 to a mass "happening" in midsummer, as the "peasant" leftist José Bové did in Larzac last August. The participants insist that they are not opponents of globalization but critics of it: not *anti-mondialistes* but *alter-mondialistes*, to use the neologism that France's newspapers have obligingly granted them. Many inattentive politicians and activists are willing to give the movement a try, assuming that it's simply a fresher version of a traditional well-meaning progressivism. For instance, when French leftists were asked in a poll before the Forum which politician represented *alter-mondialisme* to them, they answered José Bové and the staid socialist Lionel Jospin, the ex-prime minister, who in fact would have been pelted with *ordure* had he strayed within 10 city blocks of the European Social Forum.

As education minister Luc Ferry noted in an interview in *Le Monde*, during the last great crisis of the global economy, in the 1930s, there were three basic critiques of liberalism: (1) a democratic, problem-solving one (which spawned the New Deal and other reform movements); (2) a futuristic/utopian one (which was monopolized by Communists); and (3) a romantic one (reflected in a nostalgia for origins, and a drift towards fascism and Nazism). The anti-globalization movement is a combination of critiques 2 and 3, and is probably more 3 than 2. There is very little in the way of a "democratic socialist" heart to the movement.

This is not to say that its members are uninterested in capturing institutions. Many observers of the Social Forum were mystified by the grim humorlessness with which panel after panel dealt with a minor, and seemingly off-the-point topic: the European Union's constitution, which is in the process of being drafted. But the EU is one of the world's institutions that appears the most tottering, confused, and unsure of itself, and it may be ripe for hijacking. Particularly now that the Social Forum movement has linked up with a force that has all the energy and clarity of purpose that it lacks, a force that is not boring or programmatic at all: Islam.

"Not anti-Semitic in the slightest . . ."

This linkage takes many forms. Muslims were hugely overrepresented among the Social Forum's delegates; they even comprised a large chunk—perhaps a majority—of the American speakers. Perhaps this is unsurprising given the role played in this radical ideology by the American occupation of Iraq (universally opposed) and Palestinian terror against Israel (almost universally supported). The Arab world's case tends to get made in red-meat terms, as it was at a rally I attended in a mud-ringed, marijuana-smelling tent in St. Denis. The antiwar Scots member of parliament George Galloway had the audience roaring its approval when he expressed his hopes that George W. Bush would be buggered by one of Prince Charles's servants during his forthcoming state visit to Britain, and the American delegate Rahul Mahjane direly warned that the occupation of Iraq would resemble—horror of horrors—"what the United States did to Germany after World War II." The yearnings of radical Muslims are now at the core of the Social Forum's universe. They have jostled aside the left-wing economics and focus on global markets that once dominated. The key sign of this shift was the Forum's anointing of Tariq Ramadan—along with Bové—as the event's costar. Indeed, when the two

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embraced onstage on the first day of the gathering, it was taken as a richly, even smarmily, symbolic moment.

Ramadan, a Swiss-born professor of Islamic studies in Geneva, is the grandson of Hassan al-Banna, founder of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, who was assassinated in 1949 but remains a figure of inspiration for fundamentalists worldwide. Ramadan's father was one of the founders of the Saudi-funded World Islamic League. Ramadan himself is a handsome, soft-spoken advocate of traditionalist Islam whom outsiders have a hard time casting as a hardliner. He has just returned from a lecture tour of American campuses—Dartmouth, for example—where he got chipper write-ups from student newspapers.

AFP / Joel Saget

The closing march of the European Social Forum, Paris, November 15, 2003

But in 2002, the Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón linked Ramadan and his publishing house Tawhid to Ahmed Brahim, the Algerian financier of al Qaeda. This does not prove Ramadan a terrorist, or even a sympathizer, but it does mean he has important contacts in extremist circles. Then there is the matter of his brother Hani, a fundamentalist of harsher mien, who in September 2002 published a notorious article defending the lapidation (stoning to death) of adulterous women in Nigeria. Hani is director of the Centre Islamique de Genève, on the administrative council of which Tariq has sat since December of last year. So Tariq's views on the matter have been closely scrutinized. When he said on television in November that he had always denounced wife-beating, his opponents were quick to note that on page 330 of his 2001 book *Islam: The Meeting of Civilizations*, he explained that the Koran permits, even requires, the practice. But the coyote will catch the roadrunner before Ramadan falls into such an obvious trap. That is because he hews rigidly to a distinction between Islam and "Islamic cultures," and chalks all the faults in Koranic applications up to the latter. He will insist that the Koran is the best way to lead your life, and tell you that the Koran says *X*. But he will never say, "Do *X*."

In late October, Tariq Ramadan began circulating an editorial in which he attacked French Jewish intellectuals (Alexandre Adler, Alain Finkielkraut, Bernard-Henri Lévy, et al.), and one whom he'd mistakenly assumed was Jewish (Pierre-André Taguieff) for "communitarianism"—which, in its French context, means alleging that their very Jewishness led them to support Jewish interests over the universal ones proper to French intellectual life, and Israel over France. *Libération* and *Le Monde* rejected the article for being suffused with the very groupthink it purported to critique. And when the article was eventually published on *oumma.com*, France's largest Muslim website and a venue particularly hospitable to Ramadan, inquiries began pouring into the Social Forum—most of them, surely, from non-attendees—demanding to know why Ramadan was being permitted to play such a prominent role in its debates.

The Forum leadership issued a press release as dismissive as the author's rambling French would allow:

> A number of commentators have questioned the European Social Forum, claiming to see opinions of an anti-Semitic nature in the text by Tariq Ramadan that has been circulated on our emailing list. This text is not anti-Semitic in the slightest, otherwise the Comité d'Initiative Français, as organizer of the Social Forum, would have faced the consequences, even if this text is susceptible to different opinions. Consequently, the Social Forum being a pluralist space of meetings and debates, Tariq Ramadan has his place there.

Ramadan raised questions at the Forum about the "soft Islam of Turkey." It was bad timing. His remarks came only hours before al Qaeda set off two bombs in front of an Istanbul synagogue. On the same night in Gagny, north of Paris, a mammoth fire destroyed the Merkaz Hatorah Jewish day school.

It was striking how thoroughly the two events were twinned in the minds of most French people, and President Chirac reacted swiftly. He called a meeting of Jewish representatives at the Elysée Palace, where, "solemnly, in the name of the nation," he stated that "when one attacks a Jew in France, it is all of France one attacks." Clearly Chirac

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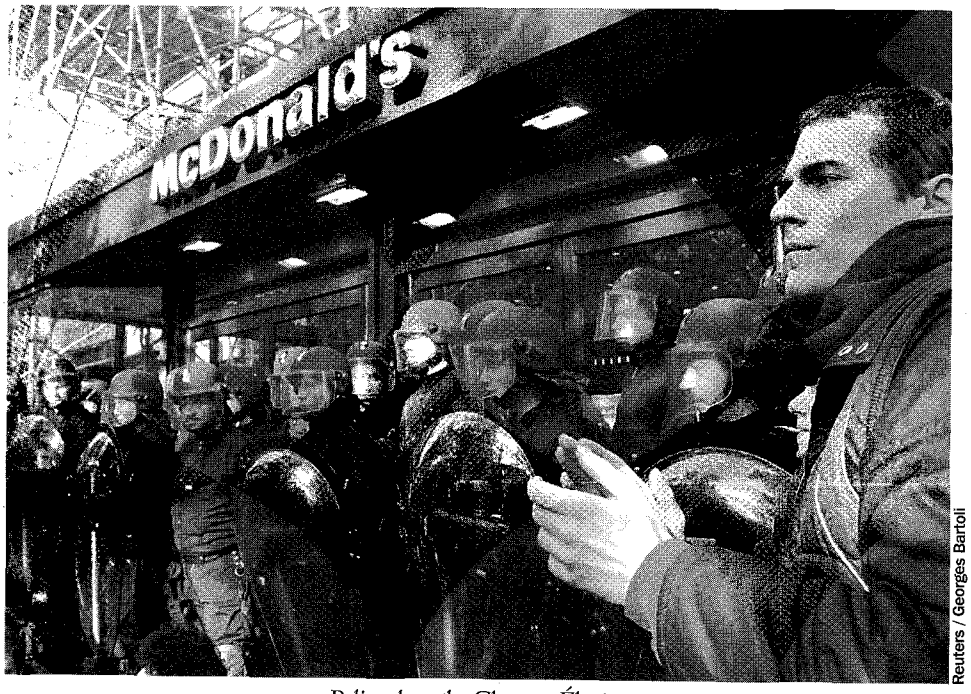

Reuters / Georges Bartoli

Police along the Champs-Élysées

feared a repeat of April 2002, when such acts were occurring at the rate of several per day. If anti-Jewish aggression has abated since then, it has never stopped. In the first 10 months of 2002 there were 184 such incidents, versus 96 this year; over the same period, anti-Semitic threats fell from 685 to 295. But a representative of the CRIF (the council of Jewish institutions in France) told *Le Monde* that the decline in vandalism reflects only a heightened vigilance over Jewish sites. Aggression and insults are now part of the fabric of daily life, according to Jews who live in metropolitan Paris, even if they take the form of harassment rather than outright violence.

The case of Rabbi Michel Serfaty is instructive. It made headlines when Serfaty was knocked down and punched in the face by anti-Semitic youths in Essonne on October 19. But it is also worth knowing that Serfaty had previously been spit on while walking to synagogue.

Shortly after the meeting with Chirac, Joseph Sitruk, the chief rabbi of France, pled with his community not to wear yarmulkes in public. "The chief rabbi has always said that head covering is an important commandment," one of Sitruk's aides told the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*. But "in the current climate, there is no point waving a red flag in public places." Sitruk suggested that France's Jews wear baseball caps instead.

Running dogs or fellow travelers?

A situation in which "progressivism" rubs shoulders with extremism creates nightmares for the French center-left. Shortly after the Ramadan essay was published on *oumma.com*, it was condemned by the Socialist party's leader, François Hollande. The smaller parties of the left took a different tack, seeking to use the occasion to pick up radical street cred. This was true not just of the Communists and the Trotskyists but also of the Greens, whose leader, Noël Mamère, implied that the whole Ramadan scandal was a plot of Socialists against the Social Forum. But to alienate the Social Forum altogether—or to draw undue attention to its antidemocratic side—would be to alienate those Trotskyite and Communist parties that won 10 percent of the vote in the first round of the last presidential elections, and which the Socialists will be counting on for their margin of victory in elections for the foreseeable future. Socialists could easily find themselves in the position the French right has been in for the last two decades, when it hemorrhaged the 15 percent of the most reliably right-wing votes in the country to a party (the National Front) which neither public opinion nor its own principles permitted it to form coalitions with.

So the Socialists tried to play it both ways. The day the Social Forum opened, Hollande, along with Denmark's former socialist prime minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, wrote a front-page editorial in *Le Monde* begging for a role in it. He and Rasmussen spoke about the unbridled global economy—an economy that Hollande's own party had done a superb job of fostering in the late 1990s under the intelligent leadership of two ministers of finance, Dominique Strauss-Kahn and Laurent Fabius, who were cut from the Robert Rubin pattern of business-friendly center-leftism. But suddenly Hollande was intoning the nightmare of the free market, which

> often enshrines the rights of the powerful, increases inequality between the North and the South [as the French call the First and the Third worlds], bypasses the collective preferences of peoples, and feeds the sentiments of fear and apathy in public opinion. At its worst, it fosters extremisms, with their logic of security and reaction.

Hollande paid respectful visits to both Attac and Oxfam at the Forum, and the future presidential candidate Laurent Fabius himself—having scrapped his business suit for casual wear—breakfasted with José Bové on opening day.

But none of this—duh!—was enough to satisfy the radicals at the Forum. On the second day of the gathering, at La Villette in Paris, protesters threw tear-gas bombs in

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the course of a "demonstration against the presence of the Socialist party at the European Social Forum." Not against anything they said—against their *presence*. When it came to the Socialist party, the Social Forum was not quite the "pluralist space of meetings and debates" that Tariq Ramadan's defenders had said it was. During the November 15 closing march, hostile protesters surrounded the Socialist delegation. They accused the party of collaborating with capitalism, threw bottles, and (according to the later account of one Socialist marcher) yelled, "Lynch them!"

Whimpering for mercy

But it is not just Socialists who will bear the brunt of France's shifting politics. The week after the Forum ended, the immensely popular Nicolas Sarkozy, France's law-and-order minister of the interior, appeared on France2's popular television show "100 Minutes to Convince" with the newly exalted Tariq Ramadan and Jean-Marie Le Pen invited alongside to grill him. Although Sarkozy is French voters' idea of an ideal future prime minister (54 percent see him in this role, versus just 26 percent for his rivals Alain Juppé and Dominique de Villepin), and although Sarkozy has a lot on his plate, including the suppression of a low-intensity terrorist uprising in Corsica, almost the entirety of the discussion surrounded the issues of immigration, assimilation, and Islam.

Sarkozy has created a French Council of the Muslim Faith, which brings Islam somewhat into conformity with French laws that govern Catholicism, Protestantism, and Judaism. He is proud of it. Unfortunately, it is already headed for legitimacy troubles, for its president Dalil Boubakeur, rector of the Great Mosque of Paris, is dismissed by the *purs et durs* of ghetto Islam as something of an Uncle Tom. It is unlikely the Boubakeur tendency will be able to hold out long against the Union of Islamic Organizations of France, which is more partial to Tariq Ramadan. Sarkozy, it is true, impressed audiences by keeping Ramadan at bay throughout the evening. "I didn't like your article [on Jewish communitarianism]," he said. "To my mind, you should think with your head, not with your race."

But substantively, Sarkozy has no better solutions to the problem of assimilating Islam than anybody else. It appears that more drastic measures are going to be necessary. Affirmative action, which so deeply violates the French republican creed of equality under the law that it was unthinkable even to the left in France just five years ago, has just been held legal by a court ruling on a controversial admissions program at the Institut d'études politiques. And Sarkozy became the first French government official to sing its praises. Some neighborhoods are so disadvantaged, he said, "that if you don't give them extra assistance, they'll never get ahead." He promised that he would soon appoint a Muslim prefect. And one of the first areas in which affirmative action is likely to be used in a broad way is in the hiring of police.

Then he got to the most vexing problem: the veil. Since the late 1980s, a few girls every year have decided to challenge France's official secularism (or *laïcité*) by covering themselves in school. This fall, whether from solidarity with Iraq or simple cultural self-confidence, veiled girls showed up in school by the thousand. And no one knows quite what to do about it. One idea is to ban *all* religious symbols in school, that is, to extend France's 1905 laws on secularism to roust religion totally out of the public square.

France's original laws on secularism were drafted to keep a declining religion—Roman Catholicism—under control. They are not much use for keeping a widely distrusted *rising* religion from dominating the public square. What's more, as the political scientist Farhad Khosrokhavar noted in a smart recent essay in *Le Monde*, the laws won't work because the stated justification—that the scarf itself is an offense against equal rights for women—would not be the *real* reason for the ban. The vast majority of the girls wear the scarf not because they're being coerced but because they are willingly practicing their religion. Such a law is simply an attack on the headscarf, and by extension, Islam. "The rest is trivia," writes Khosrokhavar—even if the government tries to make the law look serious and impartial by arresting the occasional yarmulke-wearer or a teacher who wears a cross around her neck. (Assuming that people aren't too terrified to wear yarmulkes in the first place.)

Sarkozy, to his credit, is against such a ban on religious symbols. "Are we going to accept nose-piercing [in schools] and refuse baptismal medals?" he asked on France2. But in place of such a law, the only alternative he could suggest was that Tariq Ramadan tell his young Muslim neighbors not to wear the veil to school. So here is France's "leader of the future," begging an Islamic fundamentalist to help him keep Islam out of French schools. What a predicament. Faced with a *real* religion, with real beliefs and a real sense of purpose, France's secular, consumerist society is whimpering for mercy. As Khosrokhavar correctly puts it, "the legal project in question is not principally a matter of protecting the gains of feminism, but of hiding a major crisis that is now passing through French society."

And perhaps of hiding several. ♦

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For Better, for Worse

The difficult, cross-cultural marriage of liberated Iraqis and their American liberators.

By Max Singer

Baghdad

To get to Baghdad in May, I rode 10 hours in a battered taxi from the Turkish border. When I returned last month I flew on a Jordanian Royal Wings daily charter flight from Amman, and entered through the refurbished main terminal of the Baghdad International Airport.

In May life was just beginning to return to Baghdad's streets, and schools were not yet open. Last month kids in their school uniforms were everywhere. When I needed bath sandals my driver and I walked along one of the main streets that was full of Iraqis shopping, eating, and socializing after dark, and in a few minutes looked in more than half a dozen stores before I found a size 44 pair (apparently Iraqis have small feet).

Yet over this same time, the average number of attacks on Americans and their allies increased from 5 or 6 to more than 30 per day.

The short answer to the question of what conclusions can be drawn from the conflicting reports coming from Baghdad is that the fundamental issue is Iraqi opinion, politics, and behavior, and that so far the Iraqis are going in the right direction, although certainly with many exceptions and plenty of problems ahead. The two immediate issues are the need to defeat the attacks by Baathists and foreign jihadists and the relationship between the occupation authority and the Iraqis.

Since the attacks are not related to a popular movement, we should expect that they will be defeated when the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) learns how to work effectively with the Iraqis, or as the cumulative effect of the U.S. military response to the challenge becomes decisive. The problems in fighting the Baathists and foreign jihadists are tactical, not political, and don't stem from a lack of resources (although there continue to be too few people with Arabic, police, and intelligence skills).

While the CPA has accomplished a great deal in a short time, it is still seeking the best way to work with Iraqis, and has decided to make a major change in its approach—creating a provisional government, as the Iraqis had originally proposed, by next June. Major political and psychological benefits will be gained by establishing an Iraqi provisional government, but by itself it will not create the right relationship between Iraqi leadership and the CPA. (Fortunately, much of the interaction with ordinary Iraqis is conducted by military field forces, who have become quite effective.)

The reality of the relationship at the top is that the Iraqis and the CPA are married to each other—each is dependent on the other, each needs the other's agreement and cooperation. As a practical matter they each have equal power, however the formal ties are defined. They are also more or less equally competent—because their very different strengths and weaknesses roughly balance each other. Perhaps the key to success in the relationship is for each to try to be at least as conscious of its own weaknesses and its partner's strengths as it is of the opposite. Of course this advice should be easier for the CPA to take than for the Iraqis, because the CPA has a commander with a great deal of authority and the Iraqi side is a political process still being established.

Iraqis have mixed—often incoherent—but strong feelings about the American occupation. Typically they express all of their contradictory views passionately. Iraqis I spoke to—including one who had just come back after several years in Saudi Arabia and started his own think tank—typically opened with negative remarks about other Iraqis but when questioned turned out to be supporters with quibbles, not opponents. They did not realize how their critical words could be used by listeners who did not probe more deeply. So it is easy for reporters to find whatever Iraqi perspectives they expect.

That said, my perception is that the most commonly heard explanations for our continuing troubles—that Iraqis are against us, or have turned against us, and want us out—is wrong. The Iraqis aren't angry that we came to remove Saddam. They don't see us as imperial con-

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querors—although many do think we came to protect the oil. They don't want us to go home because of the Iraqis who are killed or mistreated when we try to protect ourselves, or because they resent the presence of American tanks or Humvee convoys with guns at the ready. They aren't shooting at us because the CPA was slow in restoring electric power. The overwhelming majority of Iraqis are glad the Americans came and don't want them to leave soon—although they also want an Iraqi government with real power now.

There are serious problems in Iraq. They could easily become more dangerous. But so far the occupation of Iraq has had important net positive results, and we should expect a successful outcome. Which is to say that the CPA is entitled to claim a measure of success. The mistakes are not explanations for failure; they are reasons why improvement has not come faster and at a lower cost in lives, and why things could still get worse.

There are two underlying reasons why the coalition isn't doing better. One is that the physical and human task of building a new Iraq is genuinely difficult. The other is that different parts of the U.S. government have addressed the task with different assumptions and different goals, each trying to prevent the other from achieving its objectives, and the president has never made an effective decision between the two approaches.

The reporting in the United States has obscured the ideological or policy basis for the internal division. Foreign service and CIA officers in the CPA, and their allies in Washington and London, reflect the viewpoint of the Sunni Arab dictators of the region, who want to preserve their regimes and whom the diplomats see as providing regional stability. This leads the diplomats to want to encourage the primacy of the Sunnis (even Baathists and Arab Nationalists), who emphasize Israeli oppression of the Palestinians as the source of the region's woes. They therefore take a dim view of the Shiite majority, and the possibility that Iraq could become a model of democracy for the Arab world, as Turkey is for the larger Islamic world. Their views are the main source for most of the reporting that is not actively anti-American, and they very much influence the implementation of U.S. policy, despite L. Paul Bremer's loyalty to the policies of Rumsfeld, Cheney, and Bush. So far the American opponents of democracy in Iraq have not succeeded, because the Iraqi tendencies, in reaction to Saddam, are so much in the other direction. But this deep divergence within U.S. policy is persistent and has already made the president's goals more difficult to achieve. And the Sunni sympathizers may yet succeed in derailing the effort to build a free Iraq—all in service to what they see as an effort to save our country from the dangers of following unrealistic visions.

These fundamental issues come to the surface in the difficulties between the CPA and the Iraqi leadership. Note the criticism of the Iraqi Governing Council emanating from Amb. Bremer's headquarters and the administration in Washington this fall, before the decision to speed up the creation of a provisional government.

President Bush's opponents believe that poor performance by the Iraqis is the result of the wrongheadedness of the U.S. position in Iraq. The CPA believes that Iraqis' failure to do what they are being urged to do is the result of the weaknesses of the Iraqi leadership—and have talked about the need to improve or to replace that leadership. Neither side in the American debate considers that the problem might be in how the CPA is working with the Iraqis. Or that the lack of greater popular support for the Iraqi Governing Council might result from the perception that it has little real power and is not respected by the Americans—a classic chicken or egg dilemma.

The apostles of failure can't believe that small changes in administration tactics might produce dramatically better results—because that would mean that Bush was not wrong in his decision to remove Saddam. The CPA has trouble believing that their understanding of Iraq's needs is not as astute as that of the Iraqis', or that their lack of success in establishing good relations with Iraqi leaders might be their own fault.

A cement factory illustrates what the CPA is doing wrong and can fix. As reported in the *Washington Post* on November 10, U.S. engineers under the CPA estimated that it would cost $23 million dollars and take a year to restart production from a cement factory in Sinjar, in the northwest corner of Iraq. The CPA began the paperwork to allocate the money and start work. But while the bureaucratic process was grinding, the local military commander gave the Iraqi plant manager $10,000 in seed money to begin working. The Iraqis then cleaned out the offices and figured out that they had $240,000 worth of stored cement and cash in old accounts, which they used to improvise repairs in the factory. They succeeded in producing cement again in three months. Of course the plant wasn't working at full capacity, and it was a maintenance nightmare that would soon require more investment. But it worked.

The Iraqi political leadership wants to go to work the way the Sinjar factory was made to produce—relying on Iraqi know-how and a lot of Band-Aids. The CPA thinks it knows better. When Iraqis complain about American procedures, and want to do things their own way, the Americans often think the problem is that the Iraqis don't understand the reasons for doing it the American way, not appreciating that there may be a completely different way to do

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things. But of course the Iraqi way may have advantages as well as disadvantages that the Americans are less able to understand than vice versa.

The differences between the CPA and Iraqis about how to get cement factories running are similar to the differences between the CPA and Iraqis about how to fight against the Baathists who are killing Americans and Iraqis, and to the differences over how to create a new Iraqi government.

For each problem Iraqis and Americans need to figure out what combination of the Iraqi style and the American style makes sense. That cannot happen until the CPA understands that they and the Iraqis are equal partners and resists the temptation to explain lack of agreement by criticizing the Iraqi representatives. The CPA is stuck with its partners; they have to work together even if those partners are vain or selfish. The CPA's job is to work with the Iraqi leaders who exist; living with their weaknesses is part of the job. Of course there are problems on the Iraqi side of the relationship too.

What then is the problem? Why are there so many attacks on Americans and their Iraqi helpers? Why can't all those troops overcome the small number of Baathist killers and foreign jihadists? Are we faced with a popular insurgency against a foreign occupier —at least in the Sunni areas of the country? If there were a genuine insurgency, prospects for victory would be rather poor and distant. Fortunately the evidence indicates that there is no insurgency in Iraq. There are a small number of Baathists with loads of money and guns and sophisticated training in covert violence. But only the Americans have the authority to arrest them, and the U.S. forces are only gradually learning how to find out who they are.

In areas like Tikrit, the Baathist goons are known to all the locals, and their continued presence on the streets—as well as their continued ability to kill their enemies without response from the authorities—tells Iraqis that it is not safe to try to convince the Americans about who needs to be arrested. When the Americans learn to work with Iraqis well enough to arrest most of the right people, they will be flooded with help even from Sunnis and Tikritis.

All the American diagnoses recognize that the Army needs better intelligence to defeat its Baathist and jihadist enemies, but that makes it sound as if intelligence were a commodity that you can find or buy or be given. The intelligence that is needed is more like a process. It requires Iraqis sitting regularly in Tikrit and the other cities in the Sunni triangle. These people must be protected; they must be part of an Iraqi organization that knows how to check information they receive and integrate it with a systematic understanding of the enemy; and they must be authorized and equipped to take prompt action to protect their sources and to arrest enemies while information is fresh. Such a process would have to be controlled by Iraqis who are in intimate cooperation with U.S. forces.

Until now the CPA has not trusted any Iraqis enough to work with them in this way—although there are qualified Iraqis who have demonstrated their ability. A decision to work with Iraqis in this way could be implemented before there is a provisional government (and could be stalled even after there is a provisional government). It is also possible that the current process of improvement in intelligence gathering by the U.S. field forces, working with growing numbers of Iraqi civil defense and police forces, will be able to do the job—and we can't know yet which approach would now be quicker.

This intelligence process would be greatly aided by the arrest and temporary detention of many hundreds or perhaps even several thousand known Baathists who were part of Saddam's security or intelligence forces. Since this detention would not be punishment or conviction, it could err on the side of taking more men than necessary and releasing some in a few weeks after further questioning. The result would be to remove most of the men whom ordinary citizens fear, demonstrating that the government is determined to use sufficient force to neutralize the Baathist threat and knows what it is doing. This operation should not be evaluated with the standards suitable for a punishment and justice procedure; there is a war going on, and it requires procedures appropriate for defeating the Baathist war against the Iraqi population.

No one can be sure, but there is good reason to believe that when the Iraqis are given a proper chance to act against the Baathist terrorists—or when the gradual buildup of U.S. military intelligence efforts comes to fruition—the great bulk of the violence will be brought to a stop, Saddam Hussein will be captured or killed, and there will be sharp improvement in the political situation in Iraq. While it will probably take somewhat longer to eliminate all terrorist organizations and pick up the foreign jihadists, the favorable outcome can easily become clear in six months—although the danger of a few big terror attacks is not likely to end.

Much evidence suggests that as the CPA continues to improve its cooperation with the Iraqis, not only will there be more cement factories working, there will be fewer Americans blown up, and there may even be a good start toward a legitimate Iraqi government that will enable the Iraqi communities to live with each other in a free and peaceful country. How long it will take the Iraqis to overcome all the human frailties that make real democracy so difficult to achieve is another question. ♦

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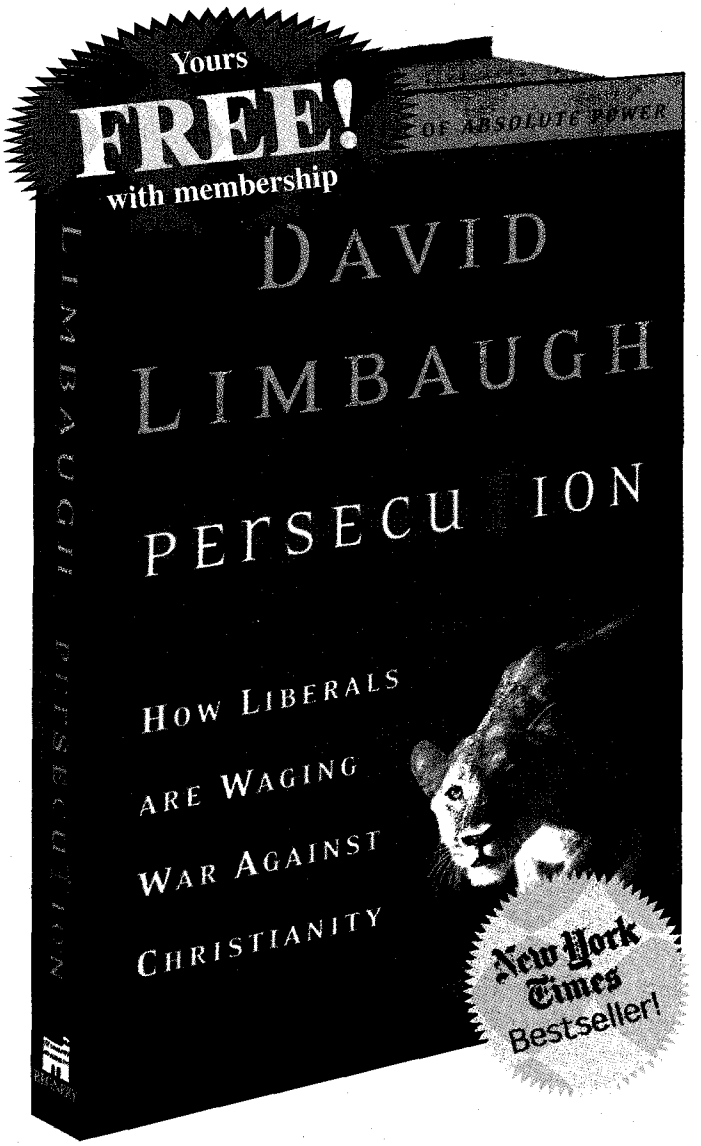
CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED? IN AMERICA?

OPEN YOUR EYES—IT'S HAPPENING RIGHT NOW!



Tolerance might be touted as the highest virtue in our popular culture, but it doesn't often extend to Christians these days. Christians are increasingly being driven from public life, denied their First Amendment rights, and even actively discriminated against for their beliefs.

In **Persecution**, best-selling author David Limbaugh rips apart the liberal hypocrisy that condones selective mistreatment of Christians in the mainstream media, Hollywood, our schools and throughout our public life. Providing details of case after shocking case, Limbaugh demonstrates that the anti-Christian forces now controlling significant portions of our society aggressively target the slightest hint of public Christianity for discrimination, yet encourage the spread of secular values—including "alternative sexuality" and promiscuity. Limbaugh cuts cleanly through this confusion and distortion, exploring the deeply held Christian faith of the Founding Fathers, and showing that Christianity and Judeo-Christian principles are essential—and were recognized by the Founders as essential—to the unique political liberties Americans enjoy.

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Ben Verkaaik

That Man in the White House

Reading the Bush bashers. BY ANDREW FERGUSON

Sometimes without straining I can remember the long-ago 1990s, when a number of people, including many of my friends—well, including me, to tell the truth—succumbed to what some of us came to call "Billy Bob Gasket Disease." That's not really the name we used, by the way. The real name came from a man who is still living in Arkansas and still intermittently in the public eye down there, and there's no point, at this late date, in dragging him into a discussion of an affliction that he, like most of us, has managed to survive.

Gasket Disease was closely linked to Bill Clinton. The man I call Billy Bob Gasket had been involved in Arkansas politics for thirty years or more. He was used to its homegrown scandals and the mostly harmless diversions enjoyed by members of its ruling class. In this spirit, back in the early 1970s, he became an energetic booster of the young Rhodes Scholar who'd come home from Oxford and Yale with the impressive hair and the glimmering eye and the semi-permanent catch in his voice.

Then, along about Clinton's first term as governor, Gasket noticed something. Bill Clinton was different. He was not just another in the long line of amiable cads and genial roués who had grasped power in Arkansas since Reconstruction. The new governor was, Gasket came to believe, the least principled, sleaziest politician he had ever seen at work. That the lack of principle and sleaziness were lacquered over with twinkly charm and vaguely progressive politics made the situation, for Gasket, all the more maddening.

And maddening is the word. As Clinton was returned again and again to office, Gasket was at first disbelieving, then agog, and finally crazed. Why couldn't his fellow Arkansans see the truth? Why couldn't they penetrate the governor's sheath of bogus empathy and concern to see the creature of seething ambition and power hunger and raw cynicism that writhed so self-evidently beneath? Gasket became a hair-puller, a lapel-grabber, a mid-sentence inter-

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rupter, a nut. When, in the late 1980s, national reporters began trickling into the state to look over the promising young governor with national ambitions, their search for knowledgeable Clinton watchers led them inevitably to Gasket, and they found a madman.

Clinton became president. Gasket Disease trailed him like a cloud. It laid waste to Republican ranks in Washington and far beyond, to vast stretches of the country at large—by the end, if I read the polls correctly, roughly a third of all Americans had succumbed. Those who caught the disease didn't just dislike Clinton, as, say, they might have disliked Jimmy Carter. The crux of Gasket Disease was not contempt but unendurable frustration. They could not fathom why everyone else didn't grasp his essential, transparent fraudulence: the phoniness of the lower-lip-bite, the moist insincerity of the smile, the vanity in every tilt of the carefully coifed head. As with syphilis, so with Gasket Disease: Some Republicans recovered, others were driven mad.

And now, according to an increasingly common view, George W. Bush has had the same effect on his political enemies that Bill Clinton had on his. He has driven them crazy; the nuthouse lately vacated by the Clinton-haters has suddenly filled with Bush-haters. Gasket Disease, according to this view, alights without regard to party or ideology—and indeed has become a professional hazard and fact of life for anyone who dares take sides in partisan politics.

Is there something to this trading-places idea? The steam rising from this year's stack of new books on President Bush suggests that there is. It's true that for sheer fantasy, none of these anti-Bush books contains anything to rival such Clinton-era classics as Terry Reed and John Cummings's *Compromised*, which asserted that Clinton had been installed as president on the say-so of Ronald Reagan's CIA director William Casey, or Ambrose Evans-Pritchard's *The Secret Life of Bill Clinton*, which implicated Clinton in drug-running and even murder. Still, the anti-Bush books I've been reading through are undeniably . . . *overdone*. Pick one up, turn it over in your hands, and you can hear, if you listen closely, the faint sound of veins popping.

The new crop of Bush-hating books owe a lot to conservatives in other ways, particularly to the political potboilers that have proved so lucrative in recent years: Michael Savage's *Savage Nation*, Sean Hannity's *Let Freedom Ring*, Ann Coulter's *Slander*, Bill O'Reilly's *The No-Spin Zone*—the list of right-wing bestsellers is long and dispiriting. Like them, the anti-Bush products are not books in the traditional sense. They're tracts, pumped up and inflated to a size sufficient to fit in display racks. In appearance they are indistinguishable from diet books or the oeuvre of Dr. Phil. Chatty and personal, skipping lightly from one subject to the next in brief, easily digestible chapters, interrupted now and then by diagrams or cartoons or pithy sayings helpfully printed in bold, they show no sign of having been written for people who read books. They have found their audience.

Had Enough?
A Handbook for Fighting Back
by James Carville with Jeff Nussbaum
Simon & Schuster, 306 pp., $23

Big Lies
The Right Wing Propaganda Machine and How It Distorts the Truth
by Joe Conason
St. Martin's, 245 pp., $24.95

The Lies of George W. Bush
Mastering the Politics of Deception
by David Corn
Crown, 337 pp., $24

Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them
A Fair and Balanced Look at the Right
by Al Franken
Dutton, 377 pp., $24.95

Thieves in High Places
They've Stolen Our Country—and It's Time to Take It Back
by Jim Hightower
Viking, 280 pp., $24.95

The Bush Hater's Handbook
A Guide to the Most Appalling Presidency of the Past 100 Years
by Jack Huberman
Nation, 335 pp., $12.95

Bushwhacked
Life in George W. Bush's America
by Molly Ivins and Lou Dubose
Random House, 347 pp., $24.95

The Great Unraveling
Losing our Way In the New Century
Paul Krugman
Norton, 426 pp., $25.95

Among the many ties that bind them, the authors are unanimous in claiming inspiration from Paul Krugman, a columnist for the *New York Times*, who, to borrow a term from epidemiology, seems to be Patient Zero in this most recent outbreak of Billy Bob Gasket Disease. You can understand why they revere him so. Unlike most Bush-hating authors—there are volumes out now by a comedian, a media gadfly, a few reporters, a political consultant, a talk-show host—Krugman has a real job, as a salaried economist at Princeton. Ten years ago he started moonlighting, writing charmingly on economic matters for *Fortune*, *Slate*, and other general-interest magazines. His well-earned success brought him a regular column on the *Times* op-ed page. He has recently gathered dozens, though it seems like thousands, of his *Times* columns and published them under the title *The Great Unraveling*.

Every collection of newspaper columns, paced in hiccups of 750 words or less, faces problems of redundancy and continuity. Whether from presumption or laziness, Krugman has made no effort to overcome them. The breathless tone is unrelieved, the repetition dazzling. Right from the start you wonder whether the author, much less a copy editor, has bothered to read the book. On page three, in a new introduction, we learn that "America's radical right now effectively controls the White House, Congress, much of the judiciary, and a good slice of the media." Seven paragraphs later, on page five, we discover that "America's right-wing movement now in effect controls the administration, both houses of Congress, much of the judiciary, and a good slice of the media."

So that must be his thesis—what happens to a country when its right-wingers in effect control the administration, Congress, much of the judiciary,

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and a good slice of the media. (Wait—did I say that already?) So that must be his thesis. (Oops!) What happens is mayhem. Krugman sees a country in which free speech is disappearing, the poor are paying more taxes than the rich, and religious superstition is supplanting evolution in grade-school curriculums. That none of these things is actually taking place does not dampen his eagerness to spread the word. "This is hard for journalists to deal with," he writes. "They don't want to sound like crazy conspiracy theorists."

Krugman is quite happy to, however—he may not have a choice—and it is this mixture of insouciance and paranoia that make his columns so unpleasant to read; painful, too, for anyone who took pleasure and profit from his earlier stuff in the 1990s. "Together," he writes, "these columns tell a coherent story." They do. Column by column, we watch a talented fellow jettisoning one gift after another—his humor, his prose style, his mental discipline, his taste—in a rush to alert everyone else to the terrible fantasy that grips him. *The Great Unraveling* should be of interest only to sadists and shrinks.

The books by Krugman's acolytes may have broader appeal. Their common thesis is most economically summarized in Jim Hightower's *Thieves in High Places*—not in the text itself, which is rendered unreadable by a tumult of exclamation points and sidebars and graphs, but in the book's index:

Bush administration:
agenda to disunite America, 36-37
contaminated food and, 208-9
corporate interests of, 5-9
dangerous policies of, 3-4
early elitist agenda of, 76

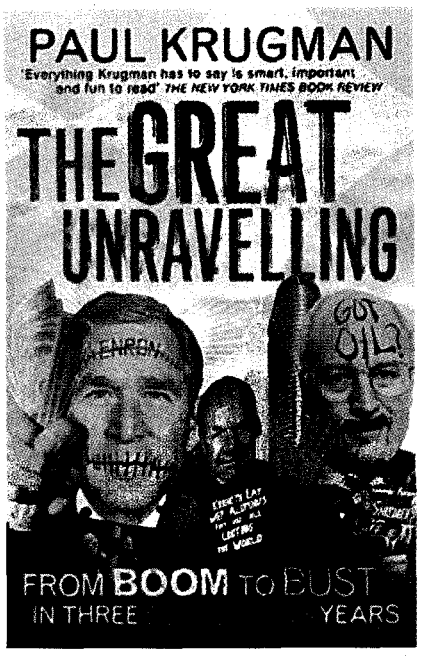
And so on, down to "undermining U.S. democracy, 240-43," the book's climax.

The titles of many of the books, too, rely on a single trope, as in Al Franken's self-amused *Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them*. Why "lies"? Why not "power-crazed" or "corrupt" or "hypocritical"? And "stupid"—what happened to "stupid"? Any competent Bush-hater thinks their man personifies these traits, too, of course. Yet the word "lies" and its variants now, in common parlance, signify them all—a shorthand summary of his every despicable instance of despicableness.

The question is why, and the most obvious possibility is that Bush really is a liar: a liar of astounding dimensions, a liar so vast that his lies overwhelm his standing as oligarch, hypocrite, or idiot. Another possibility suggests a reaction to the Clinton years. Of all the accusations leveled against Clinton, the hardest to refute was that he was a liar. Accusing Bush of the same may thus stand as a rebuttal to Clinton's accusers, since Clinton's lies, we were so often told, were about the trivial matter of an illicit liaison, while Bush's lies are about matters of state. (If only Bush had an illicit liaison to lie about!) As James Carville's ghostwriter cleverly puts it in *Had Enough?*, "Democrats lied about something we really like: sex. Republicans lie about something they really like: war and money." Calling Bush a liar is a twofer. It at once underscores the gravity of the present president's misconduct, and it condemns the frivolousness of the previous president's accusers.

There is a strategic benefit as well. If Bush is a liar, the public is off the hook. Every political polemicist thinks of himself as a Tribune of the People. *Populist* is part of the job description—and part of the self-image.

The problem for polemicists in attacking a relatively popular president is that the People are implicated as well: Maybe they like him because they're as depraved as he is. Which is unthinkable. (For if the People are evil, what of their Tribune?) Conservatives struggled with this difficulty in the 1990s, when Clinton, despite their well-orchestrated abuse, maintained his popularity through both his terms. "Where's the outrage?" wondered poor Bob Dole, swinging his lamp into musty corners as he wandered the country in 1996. In the deeps of the Lewinsky scandal, William J. Bennett published a book around the same question, *The Death of Outrage*. From *Where's the Outrage?* it is a short hop to *What in God's name is wrong with you people?* If, on the other hand, the People are being lied to



The curious jacket for the British edition.

relentlessly, then they don't really know what's going on, and they can't be blamed. They may be chumps, but they're not evil.

In *Bushwhacked: Life in George W. Bush's America*, by Molly Ivins and Lou Dubose, we meet several of these misled Americans—and they're just as colorful and earthy and pathetic as a populist could hope for. No one does populism as ruthlessly as Ivins, a graduate of Smith College and a former reporter for the *New York Times*, who holds a graduate degree from Columbia. Her political opinions are as reliably left-wing as this pedigree suggests, but she prefers to present herself as one of them spunky Texas gals what's jes full o' sass—the love child of Noam Chomsky and Minnie Pearl. She uses the word "shit" a lot. Her newspaper columns, a slapdash mix of ideological platitudes and mild jocosities, made her famous a few years ago when they were collected in a huge bestseller with the unintentionally funny title, *Molly Ivins Can't Say That, Can She?* (She can and does!) Incredibly, she has not won a Pulitzer Prize.

Bushwhacked is the best of the Bush-hating books. There is a sameness to the others, from their avenues of attack to their taste in jokes; at least four of them, by my count, reach for the line "It's deja voodoo all over again" to describe the administration's economic policies; the unimaginative Joe Conason, author of *Big Lies*, was even desperate enough to

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use it as a chapter title. (And it wasn't funny the first time.) All rely heavily on the same statistics cribbed from Krugman columns and from precooked studies got out by think tanks such as Citizens for Tax Justice and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. *Bushwhacked* sets itself apart by glossing over the dreary technicalities in favor of original reporting, presumably by Dubose, about all those colorful victims caught in the Bush nightmare.

"This country is not working for most of the people in it," Ivins and Dubose write, which will be news to most of the people in it. It is certainly not working for any of the people in this book. We meet a high-school student with money problems, an environmental activist who's angry, and a single mother with a ghastly job skinning catfish on an assembly line. Their portraits are engaging and sometimes poignant—the stuff of real journalism—until you realize how cheaply Ivins is using these unhappy people as stage props in her larger argument. Their stories are necessary because the argument is so weak. It turns out that no set of facts could ever contradict the anti-Bush thesis; for that matter, any set of facts could be adduced in its support. Bush-hatred, as the philosophers say, is unfalsifiable.

George Bush's career, like that of most politicians, traces a zigzag, as he first tacks right, then left, then back to the middle, in his endless quest to be loved for as long as possible by as large a group of voters as he can reasonably seduce. A critic might see this as cynicism, but a Bush-hater can't grant even that much. Did Bush—to take one example—sign an extension of unemployment benefits to those without work earlier this year, over the objections of doctrinaire conservatives? Well, yeah. And a pretty big one it was, too. But it is only a minor inconvenience for the authors: "So Dubya [that's George W. Bush] did better than his old man [that's George H.W. Bush] and signed a bill that got some help to some workers. But two million jobs had disappeared since he took office two years earlier."

And Bush's "education reform," the cloyingly titled "No Child Left Behind Act," caressed and nurtured in the ample bosom of Ted Kennedy, reviled by right-wingers and libertarians? It greatly expanded the federal government's role in the nation's public schools, after all, and vastly increased their funding, with special attention given to poor schools, which were asked in return only to test their students more frequently. You would think the haters would be happy.

Yet Ivins and Dubose have discovered that the bill is really designed to be a windfall for big business interests—specifically, companies that publish those standardized tests that schools will be required to use. "Follow the money," they write, inevitably. This larcenous scheme, as described here, is breathtakingly ingenious, slightly confusing, and not terribly efficient, especially if the point was merely to enrich more of Bush's rich friends. (That's what the tax cut was for!) "The idea is to set up strategic partnerships that involve market penetration in schools," write Ivins and Dubose. "Education is all about business."

It should go without saying, but I'll say it anyway: If Bush had refused to sign the education bill, he would have proved himself an uncaring hypocrite, by the standards of Ivins and Dubose. Because he did sign it, however, he has proved himself an oligarch. Bush-hatred adapts itself to any circumstance, fits any set of facts. "The term compassionate conservative is a bitter joke," they write. "Anybody who tells you different is lying for money."

So we are back to lies—the engine of the Bush dreadnought. Yet what's a lie? It's a straightforward question, and a crucial one for the Bush-haters, but they're confused about the answer. In *The Bush Hater's Handbook*, Jack Huberman tries to get to the heart of the matter. "Two lies stand out as the Bush administration's most basic, *founding* lies, if you will. The first is summed up by the political formula, 'Run center, govern right.'" He goes on: "The Bushies' second basic lie: their pretense that the closest election in history . . . somehow amounted to a mandate for a radical shift to the right."

There are some obvious problems here. For one thing, the lies singled out by Huberman aren't lies, at least as the word is conventionally defined, and it's not at all clear that "Run center, govern right" can be called a "political formula," much less a lie, and it's even less clear that the Bushies ever mounted a pretense that the election was a right-wing mandate, which doesn't seem to be the kind of thing they would make a public pretense about in any case; also, even assuming these two "founding lies" are lies, they're the same lie. Which means there's only one founding lie. Plus, it's not a lie.

Jack Huberman doesn't get us very far. Yet his confusion on the subject of Bush's lies isn't much more severe than that of the other Bush-haters. As author of a book with the title *The Lies of George W. Bush*, David Corn should

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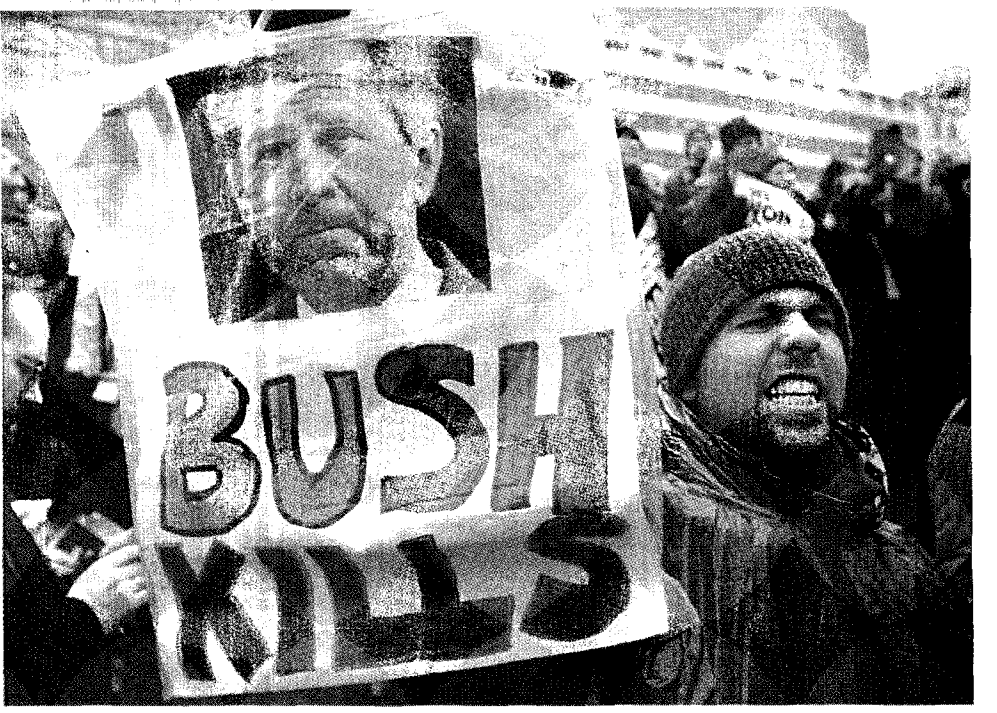
have thought the thing through. There is some evidence he tried. With an admirable, undergraduate earnestness, Corn devotes his preface to a meditation on what constitutes a lie, offering dutiful paraphrases of Machiavelli, Plato, and the inevitable Sissela Bok, author of *Lying*. His own book has "an incendiary title," Corn acknowledges, "with an incendiary theme," and sure enough he begins it with two incendiary sentences: "George W. Bush is a liar. He has lied large and small."

This is an arresting opening, in my opinion—a quick strike, building immediate momentum. But then he tries to illuminate Bush's lies by placing them in a historical context: "Most presidents lie." They do? Indeed, "there are many varieties of presidential lies," and *ffffffffft*, the air is leaking from the balloon already.

Corn's partial list of presidential prevaricators doesn't help him regain the momentum. William Henry Harrison said he'd been born in a log cabin. "Not true at all," Corn says. Supporters of President Lincoln told voters he was a country lawyer; in fact, Corn writes, Lincoln was a rich railroad lawyer. Franklin Roosevelt fudged the facts in his effort to lead the United States into World War II. In a speech delivered after dropping the Bomb, Harry Truman called Hiroshima a military base, which was only partially true (apparently there was a big city surrounding it). Bill Clinton "promised an initiative on race relations and never produced one." As a candidate, the first president Bush said: "Read my lips: no new taxes," and then, two years later—well, you know the ugly truth.

David Corn doesn't need any advice from me, but really, this is not the way to stoke an incendiary theme. If presidents have been liars from George Washington to Chester A. Arthur to Bill Clinton, then Corn's title and his opening two sentences, in retrospect, aren't nearly as shocking as they were apparently meant to be, and this in turn raises the fatal suspicion that maybe George W. Bush isn't so bad as the title suggests, either. Corn's definition of "lie" is pretty elastic, after all. Before he finishes his introduction he's expanded the word to include a broken campaign promise, an oversight, an incomplete admission, and a misrepresentation made by one group of people on another person's behalf.



Durand Patrick / CORBIS SYGMA

But wait. His cogitations continue. And suddenly we learn: "Comparisons to previous administrations, though, are unimportant." They are? Here a reader can get really confused. The historical context doesn't matter? That can't be right. How come? "Bush is the president the nation has now—at a point when honesty in government is needed as much, if not more, than ever." But surely this is just cant. Undermining government with lies is always wrong, isn't it, whether in George Bush's time or William Henry Harrison's? This is so hard to understand!

The form that Corn's confusion takes is important, because it is so widely shared by the Bush-hating books. Through them all runs a chasm separating the language used, which is sustained at the highest pitch, from the events being described, which are often mundane. The technique is usually called hype, and it's an essential feature of politics nowadays, thanks to the influence of television in all its absurdity, but on the page, between book covers, it's harder to shrug off. Corn's particular method, in the body of his book, is to print a Bush lie in bold type, and then to try manfully to expose its falsity in several hundred words.

A few examples will give you an idea. "I don't get coached," Bush once said. But Corn, through his own reporting and that of others, has discovered that Bush operatives *use focus groups* to test some of their rhetorical formulations.

There's more. Bush, describing Texas in 2000: "We still have no personal income tax." Corn: "An amendment to the state constitution—proposed and approved by a Democrat-controlled legislature before Bush took office—prohibited the imposition of an income tax without a voter referendum. Bush was assuming credit for a policy established before he had arrived."

Bush: "It's time to listen to each other." Corn: "Bush's call for a wide-open and respectful debate with plenty of listening was hokum."

Bush, a month after the September 11 attacks: "[We are] taking every possible step to protect our country from danger." Corn: "Plenty of steps were not taken."

Bush: "My [energy] plan helps people in the short term and long term." Corn: "Most of the plan's proposals, if implemented, would not affect energy markets for years."

Uncle! "This book does not document every single lie," Corn writes. The head swims at the thought of the ones that didn't make the cut.

Sometimes, like the old Washington Generals, the Bush-haters score despite themselves. Bush's failure, in the 2000

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campaign, to disclose his drunk driving arrest in 1976, as Franken and others point out, was a breach of faith with supporters who had relied on his good word (and it may have cost him a victory in the popular vote). He has never plausibly answered reasonable questions about his service in the Air National Guard, questions explored at encyclopedic length by Corn and Conason. And the means by which Bush made his personal fortune—mau-mauing the local government of Arlington, Texas, into subsidizing his sports team with taxpayer money, thus quadrupling its value and his profit when it was sold—is a particularly tawdry instance of corporate socialism.

All true, yet all relatively trivial. I myself (if you'll excuse a personal note) have no special affection for George W. Bush, though I voted for him, and I am open to the idea that he is an unusually accomplished liar, though it strikes me as unlikely. Having read through the books of his political enemies, however, and having seen them discharge their heaviest artillery, I am even more open to the idea that he is the recipient of larger amounts of unearned abuse than any president since Abraham Lincoln, with the possible exception of Franklin Roosevelt. Both of whom were liars, as we've seen.

Why do they hate him so? The experience of Billy Bob Gasket is illuminating. Conservatives afflicted with Gasket Disease were called Clinton-*haters* because their dislike for the president struck other people as out of proportion—a personal reaction inexplicable by the plain facts. It seemed not only beyond reason, but beyond politics. Clinton was the most conservative Democratic president since Grover Cleveland: overseer, among much else, of the 1996 welfare reform, the only significant reversal of the welfare state since its inception. It is unlikely, for the foreseeable future, that American conservatives will have another Democratic president so hospitable to their interests.

In the same way—and always excepting foreign policy, which was utterly transformed by the September 11 attacks and which, in any case, is not the preoccupation of most Bush-hating books—Bush's performance as a policymaker leaves little for his political opposites to complain about, and much to please them: steady increases in the nonmilitary budgets across the government, for the arts and humanities, for disease research, and now, most spectacularly, for government-run health care. Not only does Bush show no appetite to restrain the welfare state, he's been happy to enlarge it in ways that Clinton himself, hindered after 1994 by a hostile Congress, didn't dare.

To explain today's politics it is tempting to cite the old and excellent joke about feuds among college professors: The fights are so furious because the stakes are so low. The slow and stable advance of the federal government is unlikely to be undone by a president of either party, and the frenetic activities of political enthusiasts will redirect it in only the most marginal ways. Yet the joke doesn't really explain Gasket Disease. Bush-haters hate Bush for the least articulable reasons, the visceral kind that never quite rises to the level of rationality. They're often at a loss even to explain who it is they hate—the Yalie plutocrat or the hill-country Bible-thumper? The failed businessman or the cunning Babbitt? The calculating liar or the master of malaprops, the wimp or the caveman, the evil genius or the boob?

The Bush-haters know they must scramble for more high-minded reasons to explain themselves, and this year's stack of new books is the unpersuasive product of their efforts. Taken together the books make plain, if only inadvertently, that the cause of our most recent outbreak of Gasket Disease is something much deeper than policy, much deeper even than politics, plunging down and down into the mysteries of cultural identity in fractured America. At the end of *Bushwhacked*, Molly Ivins speaks for all Bush-haters when, with typical artlessness, she sums up our present state of affairs: "There is something creepy about what is happening here." But they can't quite put their finger on what it is. ♦

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Mythical Georgetown

Washington in the days of dinner parties.

BY NOEMIE EMERY

Georgetown exists in two forms. There is Georgetown, the actual place: an upscale neighborhood in northwest Washington, filled with lovely old houses. And then there is Georgetown, the legend: a mythical junction of power and style, the neighborhood where grave state decisions were made at candlelit dinners.

The Georgetown Ladies' Social Club
Power, Passion, and Politics in the Nation's Capital
by C. David Heymann
Atria, 389 pp., $26

This second Georgetown was shortlived, lasting from the start of the Cold War to the end of the 1960s, but it seemed to combine high purpose—the Marshall Plan, the containment of communism—with the kind of lifestyle that Ralph Lauren could copy (as he, in fact, has). The men were veterans, often of the intelligence services, with derring-do or narrow escapes in their background and the suggestion of swagger that comes with that résumé. The women were bright and familiar with the great fashion houses. Everyone was well read.

This Georgetown, which appears nowadays in more and more memoirs, is the subject of C. David Heymann's new book, *The Georgetown Ladies' Social Club: Power, Passion, and Politics in the Nation's Capital*, which focuses on five of its women: Katharine Graham, of the *Washington Post*, looked-down-upon duckling turned publishing heiress; the elongated and elegant Evangeline Bruce; Lorriane Cooper, a senator's wife and a Kennedy intimate; Pamela Harriman, mistress turned diplomat; and Sally Quinn, third wife of Benjamin Bradlee. Their power was great, and their parties terrific. And sometimes the price they paid was high.

Mythical Georgetown emerged at the start of the Cold War, through the merger of three different strains. One was the Central Intelligence Agency, workplace of choice for a cadre of veterans eager to use their skills and devotion to contain the new Communist threat. Many of them settled in Georgetown (where houses at the time were not too pricey). CIA head Frank Wisner moved into 3327 P Street with his hostess wife Polly (who died last year at ninety-one, still a Georgetown presence), and they soon had as neighbors a clutch of friends, including Tracy Barnes, Richard Bissell, Desmond Fitzgerald, William Colby, and Richard Helms. As Heymann writes, "If you were with the Agency or the Company, as it was sometimes called, the place to live was 2500 Q Street, a large Georgetown house subdivided into separate units. New agents . . . bought or rented houses up and down the same thoroughfare. Q Street in Georgetown became synonymous with the CIA." As he quotes Dick McLellan, a local historian, "Georgetown was crawling with spooks."

Crawling alongside them were a collection of journalists, with whom their ideas and careers overlapped. In 1952, Phil and Kay Graham bought a large house on R Street. Walter Lippmann lived in Georgetown, as did Scotty Reston. Stewart Alsop worked out of an office in the house on Dumbarton Avenue of his brother Joe. In 1957, Benjamin Bradlee moved back from Paris with his second wife, Antoinette Pinchot, and bought a house on N Street, a few doors down from one later purchased by Senator Kennedy. Most of these people shared a sensibility with the "spooks," and sometimes they were the same people. As Heymann relates: "Influenced by his World War II service in Army Intelligence, . . . Phil Graham went to unprecedented lengths to employ former members of the intelligence community."

All pictures: Atria.

Alice Roosevelt Longworth

This Georgetown set had its first regular meetings at Sunday night dinners held by the Wisners, when agents and journalists partied together, along with such people as the Bohlens and Achesons. "They were not just trifling social affairs," the Wisners' son explains. "All those people . . . were seated around a table making policy recommendations that more often than not got implemented." Robert Merry, the Alsops' biographer, claims that the Marshall Plan grew out of these meetings. Reston's widow claims the CIA urged the Wisners to hold these soirées and dinners, and sometimes helped pay for them. "These smoke-filled living rooms and parlors were truly where the business of Washington got done."

Another strand in the story was the career of John Kennedy, which lifted the Georgetown cabal to new heights. Kennedy was neither an agent nor a writer, but he had been a Georgetown

Noemie Emery is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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Above: John F. Kennedy and family on N Street. Below: Katherine Graham and Ben Bradlee.

resident almost all his political life. He had arrived there as a junior congressman in 1947 and lived there in various houses with his wife or his sister except for the few years—1955 to 1957—he lived with his wife across the Potomac in McLean, Va. In 1958, he almost literally bumped into Ben Bradlee when they were wheeling their children on N Street, and the two soon developed a friendship. (All the strands of Georgetown were knotted together in Kennedy's affair with Mary Pinchot Meyer, sister-in-law of Benjamin Bradlee and ex-wife of Cord Meyer, a power in the CIA.)

With Kennedy's political triumphs, the Georgetown establishment went into high gear. The day of his inauguration, Kennedy went late at night in the snow to Joe Alsop's, where he talked to the Coopers into the small hours. The first outing from the White House the Kennedys took was to the Coopers' Georgetown home. And in October 1962, Kennedy asked the wife of Joe Alsop to give a small dinner where he could talk without public comment to two experts on Russia about troubling signs of Soviet actions in Cuba. It was in Alsop's garden that Kennedy, in conversation with Isaiah Berlin and Chip Bohlen, received advice—that Khrushchev would back down if confronted with firmness—which he followed in the Cuban missile crisis.

Georgetown's dissolution was even sharper than its rise. By the mid-1950s, Phil Graham and Frank Wisner were both showing symptoms of manic depression. On August 3, 1963, Graham, months after a public breakdown at a publishers' conference, shot himself to death. A shaken John Kennedy went to his funeral. On November 22, Kennedy himself was assassinated on a fence-mending mission to Texas, and eleven months later—on Columbus Day, 1964—Mary Meyer was killed in a still-unsolved shooting as she walked in Georgetown along the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal.

It was a stunning succession of violent deaths for a set of people so cultured and privileged, but fate was not through with them. On October 29, 1965, Frank Wisner killed himself in his Maryland farmhouse. In 1968, Kennedy's brother was murdered while running for president. And on November 7, 1975, Sasha, the oldest child and only daughter of Evangeline Bruce and her ambassador husband, was found shot in the head on the family estate in Virginia, most likely by the man she had recently married. By this time Stewart Alsop had died of leukemia, his brother Joe had begun drinking heavily, and arguments over the Vietnam war were driving deep rifts through Georgetown society.

What dissolved along the way was the essence of Georgetown, the spirit that made many one. Kennedy, it turned out, was the first and last president to be on its particular wavelength. Johnson and Nixon were openly hostile; Ford and Carter indifferent. The Reagans established a social affinity, which did not turn into a public alliance. For the Bushes and Clintons, the mythical Georgetown scarcely existed, and the real Georgetown became merely a pleasant place filled with lovely old houses and now wildly overpriced real estate. People in Georgetown continue to exercise power, but this time as people who could

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live anywhere, not as a group with a shared sensibility.

Kay Graham probably surprised even herself when she managed to rise above the occasion in her newspaper's showdown with Richard Nixon, and Pamela Harriman stunned everyone else when she became a policy wonk and then an ambassador; but these were the acts of individual women, exercising strong wills in the shrewd use of assets bequeathed them by men. No presidents would appear in the snow on their doorsteps or ask them to throw an intimate little dinner to avert a catastrophe. When Sally Quinn turned up in the mid-1980s, trying to recreate the parties she had once covered for the *Washington Post*, it was like turning up at a ball as the best guests were leaving.

The lure of the mythical Georgetown was the promise of having it all: the idea that one can be glamorous, dashing, and deeply historic; be at the same moment self-indulgent and serious; be deeply involved in most weighty matters and still have a roaring good time. Style did not come at the expense of substance for the men of the Georgetown contingent: They had risked their lives for the sake of the country; they were serious, brave, and most patriotic; they came down on the right sides of really big issues; and addressed the big things of their time.

That said, some of these men were addicted to risk or to women. Kennedy was courting political death with his multiple beddings of film stars and gun molls, and his failings were shared by Phil Graham, whose own flaws are so deeply entwined in the illness that killed him that one cannot tell them apart.

Others suffered from the unspoken commandment that one be always witty, soigné, and well-dressed. Katharine Graham had been for years the little brown wren to her glamorous husband (who, along with her mother, seldom missed a chance to tell her how short of his standards she fell). Something of the sort may have befallen the three children of Evangeline Bruce and her glamorous husband, whose lives were the most outwardly polished and perfect of the whole Georgetown contingent. Her children ended entirely estranged from her: a son working as a janitor, a daughter entering a line of abusive relationships that ended in violent death.

Another shot at having it all took place in the 1920s, on the French Riviera, when Gerald and Sara Murphy held court for some light-hearted heavyweights, this time not in power, but art. This too ended badly. Georgetown is the Riviera for political junkies, the destination of choice for a mental vacation, and Heymann's book will not be the last on the subject. Georgetown at its peak feeds our belief that having the best of all worlds may somehow be possible. Its fall tells us once more that it is not. ♦

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Murder Most British

P.D. James strikes again.

BY JON L. BREEN

The setting for *The Murder Room*, P.D. James's thirteenth novel about Scotland Yard Commander Adam Dalgliesh, could hardly be more appropriate: a museum devoted to Great Britain between the world wars. With her unapologetic embrace of hallowed detective-story conventions, James is the strongest contemporary link to that era's traditional British detective fiction.

The Murder Room
by P.D. James
Knopf, 415 pp., $25.95

Now Baroness James of Holland Park, Phyllis Dorothy James was a hospital administrative assistant when her first novel, a country-house whodunit called *Cover Her Face*, was published in Britain in 1962. Classical British detective fiction was at a low ebb. A few of the golden-age masters were still in business—Agatha Christie, Ngaio Marsh, Margery Allingham, Michael Innes, Nicholas Blake—but new talent was sparse, and the ascendant genre for popular fiction was the spy novel. So resistant were publishers to old-fashioned detection that James's first novel would not see publication in America until 1966.

James's detective Dalgliesh is a policeman and a published poet—a throwback to such literate cops as Marsh's Roderick Alleyn and Innes's John Appleby. While his cases hold fast to such classical traditions as fairly given clues and surprising murderers, James was determined to bring more reality to the pattern, emphasizing deeper characterization, recognition of the real cost of murder on the lives of the survivors, and authentic forensic detail. (Her awareness of these matters was facilitated by her administrative jobs in Britain's Home Office between 1968 and her retirement in 1979.)

And what makes James so interesting is that she sees no contradiction in taking serious explorations of character and society, and setting them against delightfully artificial plots, rich in situations like the one that begins the 1967 *Unnatural Causes*: the handless corpse of a mystery writer found floating in a boat off the East Anglian coast, a situation supposedly suggested to the victim for one of his novels. Or the bizarre opening of the 1986 *A Taste for Death*: two bodies, one a derelict and the other a minister of the crown, found bloodily murdered in a London church vestry.

After the first four Dalgliesh cases, James delighted feminists with the introduction of female private eye Cordelia Gray in *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman* (1973), with Dalgliesh in a secondary role. Gray is on her own in the theatrical mystery *The Skull Beneath the Skin* (1982), but James doubts in her diary-cum-autobiography *Time to Be in Earnest* (2000) that she will ever return to the character, having lost her to British television, which violated the author's concept of Cordelia by saddling her with an unwed pregnancy. James has confined her subsequent fiction to the Dalgliesh saga with two notable exceptions: her breakout bestseller *Innocent Blood* (1980), an unconventional detective novel about a young woman searching for her birth parents, and the science-fictional *The Children of Men* (1993), depicting a near-future world where the human race has stopped reproducing itself.

James specializes in minutely detailed institutional backgrounds: a psychiatric clinic in *A Mind to Murder* (1967), a training school for nurses in *Shroud for a Nightingale* (1971), a home for the disabled in *The Black Tower* (1975), a forensic science laboratory in *Death of an Expert Witness* (1977), a nuclear power plant in *Devices and Desires* (1989), a centuries-old London publishing house in *Original Sin* (1995), a barristers' chambers in *A Certain Justice* (1997), and a theological college in *Death in Holy Orders* (2001). Usually the institutions are threatened from without or within, and the response of the personnel drives the plot.

Her new novel, *The Murder Room*, follows this formula. The room of the title is an exhibition room in the small, family-run Dupayne Museum, which houses items from classic murder cases. For the museum to continue, all three children of the departed founder must sign the new lease. Elder brother Marcus, a recently retired government functionary, and sister Caroline, partner in a posh finishing school, have differing agendas for the museum but want to preserve it. Younger brother Neville, a psychiatrist who scorns dwelling on the past and resents his late father, is just as determined to withhold his signature and force the museum's closure. Thus, he becomes the obvious candidate for murder victim. And when his Jaguar and what may be his charred body are found burnt in the museum's garage, the circumstances echo one of the crimes the Murder Room commemorates. (The reader must ponder whether the charred body found in the car will defy detective-fiction convention by proving actually to be who it is presumed to be.)

With a solution that is satisfying if not dazzling, the latest Dalgliesh novel will not rank with the best—I would especially recommend *Shroud for a Nightingale*, *The Black Tower*, *Devices and Desires*, and *A Certain Justice*—but it's an effective job from a writer who is always worth reading. In common

A regular writer on mystery fiction for THE WEEKLY STANDARD, *Jon L. Breen is the winner of two Edgar awards.*

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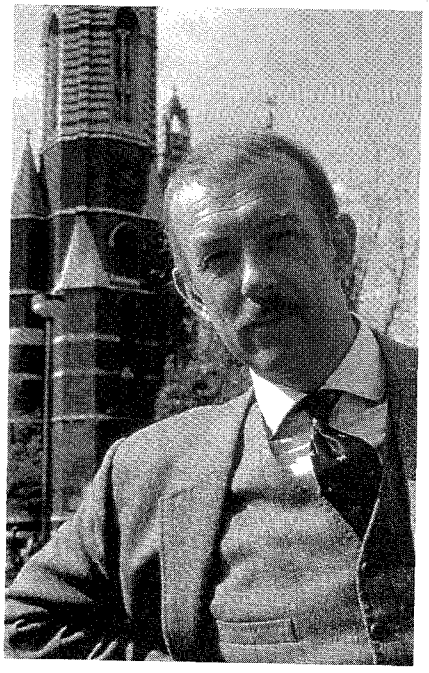
with most current crime novels from major publishers, however, it is longer than it needs to be. In a literary Utopia, every story would occupy its ideal length, but the market piper calls the tune. Beginning with World War II paper shortages and continuing into the 1980s, the standard detective novel ran just under two hundred pages, or about sixty thousand words. With the increasing emphasis on blockbusters in the past couple of decades, mysteries now often run to twice that length.

While some writers read as if they have been coerced to add length, the trend came naturally to James. Even her early novels move at a leisurely pace, leaving no city thoroughfare or country lane, no house or room, no character central or peripheral undescribed. In her longer novels, she sticks to the case at hand and rarely resorts to the desperate devices of lesser writers: irrelevant recurring cast members, soap-opera and situation-comedy subplots, undigested research material, characters who constantly recount to each other things the reader already knows. James adds new matter—more description, more atmosphere, more extensive back stories for her people—but runs the risk of overbalancing the plot, bringing the action to a grinding halt and encouraging the impatient reader to skip the narrative and get the story from the dialogue.



Above: P.D. James in 2001. Below: Roy Marsden in the television role as Inspector Dalgliesh.

Introducing a recent reprint edition of Clyde B. Clason's 1939 novel *Murder Gone Minoan*, Tom and Enid Schantz claim that P.D. James "started out writing tightly crafted gems, but all of her books after *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman* . . . bog down in endless details about the contents of suitcases or in long pieces of melancholy introspection by her leading characters."

This may be too harsh an assessment, but it has an element of truth. In *The Murder Room*, couldn't the life history of museum custodian Tallulah Clutton be summarized in a paragraph or two instead of a six-page chapter? Do we require a full chapter on the discovery of a piece of evidence in a charity shop, when a phone call to the police from offstage would have done the job?

A good detective story, even at novel length, is like a short story: a narrative in which all the elements are directed toward an overall effect and not dispersed into tangents. How often are the additional character insights brought about by extensive back stories and interior monologues profound enough to justify bringing plot movement to a halt? One could rightly argue that James is up to more than writing a detective story, that she offers real insights into society and the effect of crime on those involved, as victims, investigators, suspects, or peripheral figures. But recall how much depth of theme, character, and social observation Ross Macdonald was able to insert in his novels while providing a briskly paced story. Additional detail sometimes spells increased depth, but not always.

None of these caveats, of course, should deter James's fans from enjoying her work or new readers from discovering it. While the padding and tangents of some contemporary crime writers should be consigned to the wastebasket without looking back, James is too interesting a writer for her extraneous passages to be completely without interest. *The Murder Room* is another successful outing from a master in the genre. ♦

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For Whom the Nobel Tolls

A deserved prize for J.M. Coetzee.

BY MICHAEL S. KOCHIN

The 2003 recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature is not a surprise choice. J.M. Coetzee appeared on many lists of likely candidates, since his nine books of fiction, as well as his critical essays, have won him worldwide attention. This is no more than Coetzee deserves: His spare, disciplined style enables the expression of a magnificent imagination.

Yet perhaps the decision of the Swedish Academy should have come as more of a shock: Here is a man who does not believe that literature can save us. The prize is given, according to the terms of Alfred Nobel's bequest, for "the most outstanding work in an ideal direction," while J.M. Coetzee's works expound a critique of the ideals of the modern West and of the possibilities of literature as a vehicle for those ideals. Coetzee has tackled both the transient and the permanent difficulties of modernity: rationalist social engineering as exemplified in Western colonial projects from Vietnam to Zululand, modern humanism, and the hope for a rational system of ethics.

More important, Coetzee has in his fiction critically explored the notion that literature as we know it can promote humane ideals. His work constitutes a radical challenge to our learned prejudice that Western high culture can help twenty-first century men and women find a humane life together. Coetzee criticizes Western high culture from within: His essays reveal him as a penetrating critic of great figures of modernist fiction such as Robert Musil. Yet Coetzee's greatest literary debts as a novelist are to the experimental formalism of writers such as Franz Kafka and Samuel Beckett. Like Kafka and Beckett, Coetzee carries on literary modernism's critique of technological modernity while parodying modernism's aspirations that literature can replace religion as a ground for community and as a moral compass.

For Coetzee's biography, one should first turn to his self-interpretation. He has to date published two volumes of memoirs, under the general title of *Scenes from Provincial Life*. In *Boyhood* (1997), Coetzee comes to perceive his own perplexed place in apartheid South Africa as an English-speaking son of a liberal Afrikaner father. He also grows into an understanding of his father's decline from lawyer and businessman husband to impotent drunk. *Youth* (2002) presents Coetzee as a student of twentieth century literature and an apprentice computer programmer and writer. Coetzee there depicts his preparations for his self-exile from South Africa as well as his subsequent failure to find a place for himself in early 1960s London as a computer programmer. For the still adolescent Coetzee, computer programming is a way to fill the hours while waiting to be possessed by Eros and the Muses. He fears that if he actually puts all his energies into poetry or love, nothing great will happen for him in either field.

Coetzee left England in 1965 for the United States and the University of Texas, from which in 1969 he received his Ph.D. in English for a dissertation that applied computerized stylistic analysis to the works of Samuel Beckett. From 1968 to 1971, he taught African literature at SUNY Buffalo, but then his fledgling career in the American academy came to an abrupt halt as the vagaries of American immigration law drove him back to South Africa and the University of Capetown.

Coetzee occupied a tenuous intellectual and political position in the waning days of apartheid, which he chronicled in three volumes of collected essays, *White Writing* (1988), *Giving Offense: Essays on Censorship* (1996), and *Stranger Shores* (2001), and a volume of essays and interviews, *Crossing the Point* (1992). Coetzee's anomalous status as an experimental novelist afforded him the luxury of being ignored by the regime's censors and political police, even while being criticized by the African National Congress's self-appointed intellectual vanguard for failing to adhere to their Stalinist aesthetic canons. In political conditions that seemed to defy moderation, Coetzee was a respected and respectable critic of both apartheid and the ANC's house intellectuals and party-line writers, most notably Nadine Gordimer. In the last few years Coetzee has finally succeeded in achieving the status of an academic émigré, holding a professorship in the University of Chicago's Committee on Social Thought and a distinguished fellowship at the University of Adelaide, Australia.

Much of Coetzee's work consists of studies of colonial and post-colonial dilemmas: *Dusklands* (1974) has two linked parts, "The Vietnam Project," an account of psychotic breakdown in the guise of a RAND-type think tank report on Vietnam by a psychological warfare expert; and "The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee," a commentary on Hegel's master-slave dialectic in the guise of an eighteenth-century African explorer's narrative, together with suitably forged scholarly apparatus. *In the Heart of the Country* (1977) tells several forbidden stories of colonial desire. Its gappy narrative and hallucinating female narrator call attention to the prison-house of the text that seems to keep us from coming to terms with life as it is lived. Using the novel, Coetzee shakes our faith in

Michael S. Kochin teaches politics and literature at Yale and at Tel Aviv University.

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the edifying virtues of that very literary form.

Waiting for the Barbarians (1980), Coetzee's first novel to receive major public recognition, borrows from Kafka—especially Kafka's surreal fragments on Imperial China—to tell the story of a provincial magistrate who has to confront the brutality and stupidity of the civilization he is sworn to defend. *Life and Times of Michael K* (1983) presents a disfigured gardener on a quest through a hypothetical wartorn late apartheid South Africa for a patch of land where he can cultivate his own garden in freedom. That his quest takes him through an Eastern Cape province gulag turns out to be more of a problem for Michael's warders than for Michael K himself.

On its surface, *Age of Iron* (1990) comes much closer to realism. It purports to be the last letter of a retired Capetown classics professor, Helen Curren, who is condemned to die of cancer in what she regards as the hell of Virgil and Dante on African earth. Humanism, as Coetzee portrays it in the character of Helen, lacks the internal resources to respond to the brutality of the apartheid state or the militant ignorance of the townships. *Foe* (1986) retells Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. In Coetzee's version, "Cruso's" Friday is not a Carib cannibal but an escaped African slave, whose tongue has been cut out, either by an Arab slave-taker, or by Cruso himself. The novel is an account of the failure of both Susan Barton, a middle-aged woman cast away on Cruso's (and Friday's) island, and of the great writer "Daniel Foe" to comprehend and retell Friday's story.

In these post-colonial novels, Coetzee studies how colonial projects attempt to subjugate or extinguish the native and simultaneously preserve or revive his voice—through literary depiction or social-scientific inquiry. The native responds by refusing recognition and maintaining effective silence, while surviving as a mute refutation of the colonial effort. As Michael K thinks to himself in his first prison camp, "There seemed nothing to do but live." Coetzee's native victims of colonizing desire pay in their sufferings "the price of being alive," to apply a phrase from *Boyhood*; but they live the truth that the value of everything in life comes from enjoying it in freedom. Thus Michael K says of the pumpkin he has managed to grow for himself while squatting on an abandoned Afrikaner homestead, "such pumpkin I could eat every day of my life and never want anything else." The colonizer fails to satisfy his desire to hear the authentic voice of the Other. All of his efforts, from which Coetzee is careful not to exclude his own novels, produce only ventriloquism.

Coetzee's work has grown both richer and more accessible in *Master of Petersburg* (1994), *Disgrace* (1999), and his latest book, *Elizabeth Costello* (2003). In these, Coetzee deploys his formal imagination as an experimental writer, but allows the reader to get something without having to untangle all the formal play. In *Master of Petersburg*, Coetzee moves from the colonial periphery and the literature of colonialism and empire to the imperial capital and the literature of social conflict. We tour the squalid slums and the revolutionary underground of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's St. Petersburg with Dostoyevsky himself as our guide, in place of Dante's Virgil.

Both the psychological novel and revolutionary terrorism are found wanting in Coetzee's depiction of Dostoyevsky's efforts to come to terms with the suspicious death of his foster son. The psychological novel, we learn, is inevitably misread as offering solace, when it is merely the author's transformation of human emotions and relations into a product whose value to life itself is anything but manifest.

The writer voids himself of what is alive within him in writing: His gifts to us come out of pathology rather than fullness and superfluous love. The revolutionary terrorists, for their part, want action rather than words, but can only substitute violence for their own failures of imagination.

He learned quickly that TV brings out the "crazy" in people. Naturally, he started taking notes.

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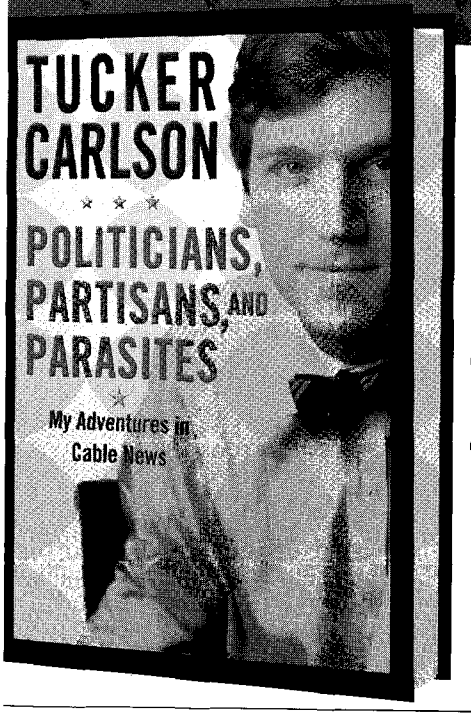

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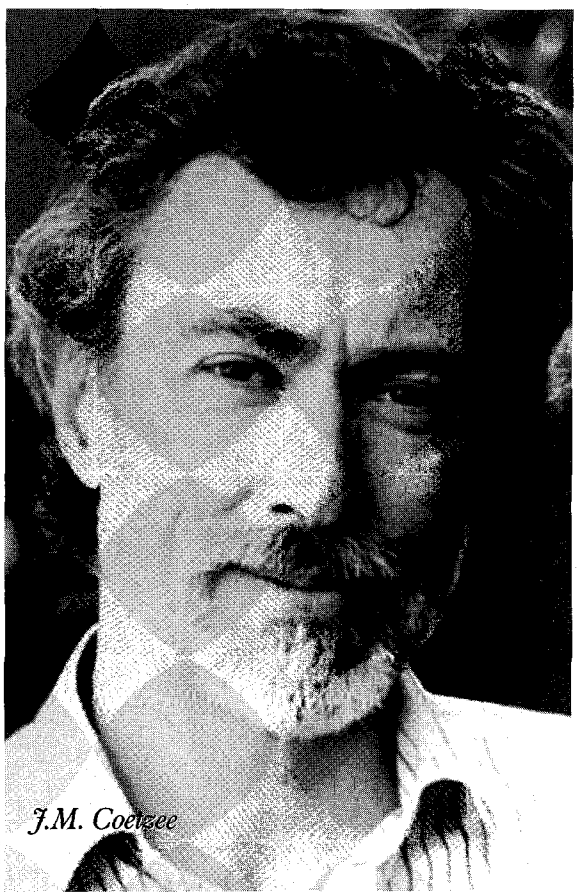
In *Disgrace* and *Elizabeth Costello*, Coetzee argues that the Western artistic, literary, and philosophic heritage neither equips us "Westerners" to deal with the moral horrors produced in modernity (the Nazi holocaust, colonialism in some of its nastier African manifestations), nor can it assimilate the teeming masses at the cultural periphery of the West. David Lurie, the subject of *Disgrace*, is serving out his time teaching "Communication Skills" and "one special-field course a year, irrespective of enrollment." Lurie tries to spice up this weary existence by having an affair with a young coloured (to use the South African term) theater student, Melanie Isaacs. As Lurie discovers, the old prohibition on miscegenation is replaced with a new prohibition on intergenerational sex, at least when not properly paid for. Melanie's boyfriend intervenes so as to break off the affair, and he and Melanie's father see to it that Lurie is brought up on disciplinary charges that result in his dismissal. Lurie flees to his daughter Lucy's farm in the Eastern Cape, where he takes refuge from the bleak fact that he has outlived his sexual attractiveness. Lucy is attacked by two men and a boy, the last a brother-in-law to her Xhosa neighbor Petrus. The attack, Lurie comes to realize, is used, if not instigated, by Petrus to humble Lucy and force her to accept Petrus's protection and yield control to him of her remaining land. Lucy cannot prosecute or even admit what the three men have done to her, because in "this place," South Africa, she can find her place, she says, only by renouncing all claims to rights, whether over her person or her property.

In *Disgrace*, we see not only the end of romance, but also the apparent end of all distinctively human possibilities for a life worth living, as racial inequality is overcome by tribal chaos. In the face of the brutal reality of the South African past, nostalgia for civilization and its values is untenable—the only solace that Coetzee's character Lurie holds out to the reader is the possibility of redemption through an art that accompanies the memorial traces of longing, like the soft trio of instrumentalists on cello, flute, and bassoon accompanying the singer in Lurie's unfinished and perhaps unfinishable opera on Byron's last mistress, Teresa. Yet that art can only redeem us if its value is recognized by a human future whose probability Coetzee presents as highly questionable.


J.M. Coetzee
CORBIS

Elizabeth Costello is not a novel, but is built around accounts of fictional academic lectures delivered by the title character, an Australian novelist and critic. The "Eight Lessons" that constitute *Elizabeth Costello* range in style from realism in "The Lives of Animals" and "The Humanities in Africa" to mock realism (lesson 1, "Realism"), to a pastiche of Kafka, and they are placed in the book out of narrative order. Those who delight in metafictional gameplaying will note that in lesson 6, "The Problem of Evil," the fictional novelist Elizabeth Costello encounters the real novelist Paul West at a conference in Amsterdam and gives a lecture attacking his real book, *The Very Rich Hours of Count von Stauffenberg*, for its lush portrayal of the torture-murders of the failed conspirators in the 1944 plot against Hitler.

The lesson called "The Novel in Africa" takes place on a cruise ship to Antarctica, on which Costello is booked as entertainment along with a Russian band and an ex-Nigerian ex-novelist. That novelist, Emmanuel Egudu—whose name and opinions call to mind Romanus Egudu, a scholar of West African oral poetry—describes himself in the third person: "He teaches in colleges in America, telling the youth of the New World about the exotic subject on which he is an expert in the same way that an elephant is an expert on elephants: the African novel." Coetzee thus recalls linguist Roman Jakobson's grounds for rejecting Vladimir Nabokov (at the time assistant curator of butterflies at Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology) for a position in literature: "An elephant is a very fine animal but he should not be confused with a professor of zoology." J.M. Coetzee can claim to be both elephant and professor.

Emmanuel himself isn't a good example of either. In his sentimental cruise-ship lecture, he claims all of the virtues for the traditional African understanding of life and art, while he refuses to come to terms with anything in the reality of present-day Africa, save its inability to offer him the comforts to which he has become accustomed. If Coetzee undermines our hopes in Western high culture, he also shows us that sentimental multiculturalism offers us nothing beyond the tired seductions and hack philosophy

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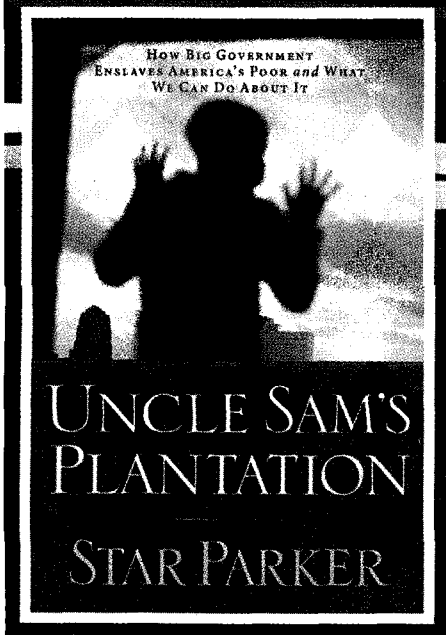
of an Emmanuel Egudu. With Elizabeth Costello we recognize that we are no longer naive enough to fall for Emmanuel's line, while we would still like to believe that we retain the openness that made our seduction by multiculturalism possible.

Although multiculturalism cannot save us, Western humanism, Coetzee shows, is unlikely to save us either. In Lesson 5, "The Humanities in Africa," Elizabeth Costello flies to Natal to be present at the award of an honorary doctorate to her sister, a former classical scholar turned Catholic nun and medical missionary. Sister Blanche delivers a deliberately provocative commencement address depicting the abyss between the humanist hopes of classical scholarship and the theocentrism of Christianity. As Coetzee shows, a glimpse of this abyss does not disturb post-Christian academics, so much as make them squirm at the faux pas of its being mentioned aloud.

Blanche then takes Elizabeth to visit her hospital in rural Zululand, where Elizabeth meets Joseph, a wood-carver of real artistic potential who has spent life carving images of Jesus in agony upon the cross. Where Elizabeth sees talent wasted, Sister Blanche sees the sacrifice of personality in adoration of the sacrifice of "Our Savior." Elizabeth has no counterargument for her sister in defense of humanism: She admits that humanism promised salvation—in the eighteenth century through reason, in the twentieth century, as D.H. Lawrence claimed, through the worship of the dark gods of sexuality. Western humanist high culture can only survive, Elizabeth acknowledges, in the unlikely event that it can find some new and compelling way to respond to the craving for salvation. Elizabeth's only persuasive response to Blanche's preaching, and it is a response that Elizabeth refrains from communicating to her sister, holds out the prospect not of salvation through works of the human spirit but through celebration of the moments of bodily pleasure possible even amidst wretchedness and suffering.

Disgrace and *Elizabeth Costello* display Coetzee's unsurpassed understanding of the paradoxes and absurdities of the postmodern academy, his critique of multicultural sentimentalism, and his disciplined inquiry into our ability to go on in the light of the very worst human possibilities. *Disgrace* shows us the injustice of apartheid and its sequel, racially motivated crime and consequent moral squalor. *Elizabeth Costello* puts on the table the Nazi regime and its crimes, with a brief mention of Hitler's "older brother and mentor," Stalin. Both works confront the peculiar academic mode of analyzing and representing these possibilities: We go on with writing and composing in the face of these phenomena, despite the fact that we



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—*Rush Limbaugh*

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cannot find in Western humanist high culture the resources to confront them forthrightly. Speaking through Costello, Coetzee asks whether the representation of these possibilities is a moral duty, or a source of moral corruption.

Coetzee is a disturbing writer because he excavates the lost possibilities of the Western tradition only to extinguish the hopes that we have wrongly placed in Western high culture. The white male academic, who reads Coetzee seeking self-knowledge, is told that his days are over by one who knows the promises and the failures of Western literature as well as any critic of our time. Such a reader, to say nothing of others, must face the fact that after him will come not a global cultural wasteland, but something wholly new, whether local, peripheral, national, or global. From this rebirth, Coetzee claims, a reader sufficiently versed in Western high culture to appreciate Coetzee's own critique is by virtue of that very knowledge excluded. Perhaps the most disturbing possibility Coetzee raises, for his typically secularist reader, is that this rebirth might come out of Christian faith in the value of suffering, a faith that demands its believers spurn humanist affirmations of permanent value in the beauties of form.

A lesson here for Americans is that our liberal political arrangements may not be currently realistic in many places. Coetzee teaches the unlucky ones, those neither born American nor capable of becoming American, that one cannot wait for freedom to begin to live. As Mrs. Curren says to a young comrade in *Age of Iron*, "Life is not following a stick, a pole, a flagstaff, a gun, and seeing where it will take you. Life is not around the corner. You are already in the midst of life."

The American project of a life together in freedom should temper its hopes with an accurate perception of the needs and passions of those who find themselves excluded from our experiment. We are indebted to J.M. Coetzee for the manner in which he has employed his learning, his skill, and his judgment to teach us this lesson and others. ♦

American Abroad

Jefferson in France.

BY ALAN PELL CRAWFORD

In August 1784, forty-one-year-old Thomas Jefferson arrived in Paris with his elder daughter Martha, then eleven, to help John Adams and Benjamin Franklin hammer out commercial treaties with Great Britain and France. His younger daughter, Mary Jefferson came later, accompanied by her fourteen-year-old maid, Sally Hemings.

Jefferson's Demons
Portrait of a Restless Mind
by Michael Knox Beran
Free Press, 265 pp., $25

Although Jefferson was supremely qualified for the post, the diplomatic assignment had come to him because sympathetic friends, noting that Jefferson had gone into a psychological tailspin upon his wife's death, felt a change of scene would do him good.

They were correct. What followed, during Jefferson's five years on the European continent, was more than a period of commendable public service. It was also a time of great importance to Jefferson's intellectual development and his aesthetic refinement—which Michael Knox Beran explores in some depth in *Jefferson's Demons: Portrait of a Restless Mind*. Jefferson's experience of European culture, Beran believes, also provided a sensitive man of fragile psychological equipment with inner resources on which he could draw in times of stress. These resources, brought home, enabled him to act on the political stage with an assurance that before had been denied him.

Among the *philosophes* of Paris, Beran writes, Jefferson "fell victim to strange languors, dull states of mind, intellectual flaccidity." This seems a stretch for the American who not only tended to his official duties but also found the energy to read, write, study, and socialize. This is not to say that the sensitive Jefferson did not suffer from occasional spells of moodiness.

He probably did. These moods seemed to coincide with his great love affair of this period, which was not, alas, with "dusky Sally," as Jefferson's critics would call his daughter's babysitter and playmate. Whether he ever looked twice at the slave girl is impossible to know, but the paper trail that documents the feelings the widower had for an English portrait painter's wife was never secret. Jefferson's "head and heart" quarreled over the comely Maria Cosway, although, for reasons that are still murky, things did not work out.

Eager to take his mind off his troubles, Jefferson headed south in February 1787 and, for three months, passing through Nîmes, Lyons, Milan, and Genoa, he was "nourished with the remains of Roman grandeur." At Nîmes, he sat spellbound before the Maison Carrée, which he would propose as the model for the Virginia state capitol back in Richmond. "It is sometimes said that savants like Jefferson turned to the art of the Greeks and Romans because they found in the classical civilizations an aesthetic vocabulary commensurate with the severe and rational geometry of their enlightened ideals," Beran writes. "In fact, Jefferson turned to the classical peoples precisely when his enlightened oracles failed him, and left him unreconciled to the terrors of life. He found,

The author of Unwise Passions: A True Story of a Remarkable Woman and the First Great Scandal of Eighteenth-Century America, *Alan Pell Crawford is at work on a book on Thomas Jefferson.*

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in the archaic poetry of the Mediterranean, conceits that could touch aspects of his existence beyond the reach of reason and common sense."

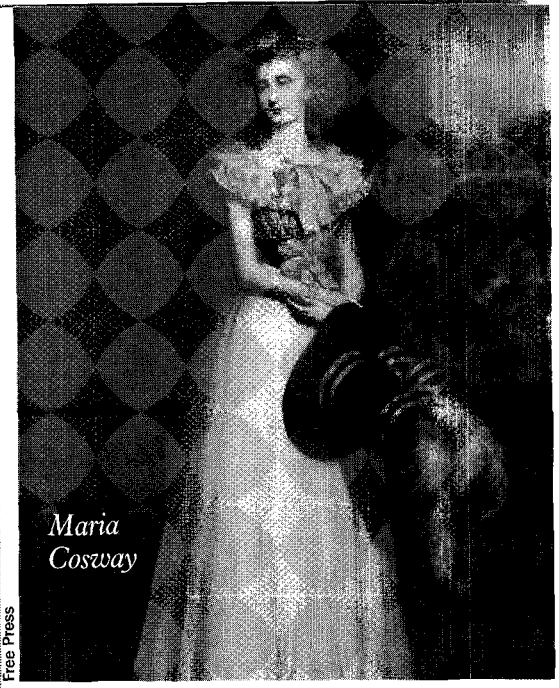
This may be true, though much of it must be inferred—from the friezes at Monticello, for example—rather than established. Jefferson, who was not averse to philosophizing, said little about it in his own writings or in his letters.

That he came home feeling refreshed seems indisputable. He did go on to accomplish important things, although the connection between his time in Europe and those accomplishments remains a matter of supposition and conjecture. Beran is no stranger to either. And the Jefferson he gives us—an aesthete who is as comfortable discussing ladies' underwear with Abigail Adams as he is discussing political economy with John Adams—must be reckoned an original, though one by whom some readers may be put off.

In his eagerness to evoke this aspect of the man and his times, Beran far too often strikes a tone overly self-serious and affected. The lonely Jefferson is not widowed but "unwifed." Mrs. Cosway, accused by less sensitive souls of "strumpetry," perceives her gloomy paramour's "Nullifidian cast of mind." The lovesick swain finds his lady's London, with its "dark wet eaves-drip days," to be "dark and gray like dead men's guts." When Jefferson tears himself away from her clutches, he finds he prefers—as who would not?—the "thick-pleached vineyards" of Provence, where "startled goats leap from concupiscent vineyards" and wines exude "the soft vapors of half a thousand years." Older but wiser, our hero must in time return with his children and servants to the "sogland of the Potomac," where the soil is "malmy and slack" and his Federalist adversaries' every move is "freaked with vice."

He goes on with his life, rising to the presidency itself, and never sees the long-suffering Mrs. Cosway again, although their heartfelt letters murmur to us through the intervening centuries. The lack of equally compelling documents establishing an amorous relationship with a certain handsome black woman, now all grown up and living within arm's reach at Monticello, may be proof only that their "transactions" were "unlanguaged." This absence of incriminating documentary evidence may strike some readers as most unusual or even suspicious, involving as it does a "soft, mammering man," more given to loquacity than, say, taciturn George Washington, but facts is facts.

The Jefferson that Beran gives us is quite unlike Washington or any other Founder. If the author somewhat overdoes it in his attempt to portray Jefferson the aesthete, he may perhaps be forgiven because, until now, no one has done it at all. Jefferson was, "in his innermost vocation, an artist," Beran writes. His greatest contributions to his country's development were not operational or administrative but poetic. His "most successful political acts nearly always involved the imposition of literary form on the messiness of public life."


Maria Cosway

Free Press

This puts the matter quite well, and Beran presents a plausible account of how Jefferson managed to pull these conflicting elements of his complicated personality together in such a way as to make such unique contributions possible at all. For that alone, Beran's *Jefferson's Demons* deserves a fair and respectful hearing. ♦

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Books Worth Giving This Christmas

by J. Bottum

Every year, as the passing seasons rest again in winter from their autumnal labors, and Christmas nears anew with its bright promise of friends and family, calling us to recollect for one brief moment our better selves, I realize with sudden freshness—like a child, face pressed to the frost-nipped window and cheeks aglow with innocent wonder—just how much I hate books.

I mean, I really dislike the damn things. It's always around October when review copies begin pouring in for the Christmas rush—a function of the delusional optimism of publishers, who think, in defiance of anything resembling ordinary business sense, that they can lose money eleven months of the year and make it all back in December.

Right now, there are perhaps twelve hundred new books piled up in dangerous towers in my home and office, and if I never see another one, I'll be glad. Use them for landfill, prop up table-legs with them: I don't care. Burn them for roasting marshmallows, and I'll be grateful. Mark them up with yellow highlighting pens, and I'll . . . well, no, some things are too rotten to contemplate. But almost any other cruelty is fine. Just don't make me look at any more of the blasted things.

Around 75,000 new books get published in English every year. How is any one supposed to keep up? In fact, there's a great new—*um*—book on the topic, ***So Many Books: Reading and Publishing in an Age of Abundance*** **(Paul Dry, 160 pp., $9.95)**, by Gabriel Zaid, a Mexican writer who claims that ironic enjoyment is about the only possible response to the fact that "the human race publishes a book every thirty seconds."

He's wrong. There's also bitter, unremitting hatred. But he's on to something when he argues we need to let go of any impulse to master the things. Reading at an average rate, you would need 250,000 years just to get through the books *already* published, while reading merely a list of their titles would take fifteen years. Who needs it? Books these days are like the rain: Catch the ones that fall on your head, and let the others wash down the storm sewers. "The truly cultured," Zaid observes, "are capable of owning thousands of unread books without losing their composure."

I suppose I should aspire to that condition. In the meantime, however, here are a few books I wouldn't mind giving this Christmas.

Art for Art's Sake

The most beautiful book published this year—well, what is probably the most beautiful book is one I haven't yet managed to see. At 40 inches, 75 pounds, and $6,000, its publishers call it the "biggest, heaviest and most expensive" book in the world, and they may be right. ***Modern Art: Revolution and Painting*** **(Artmedia, 544 pp., $6,000)** comes with its own hardwood stand to keep your bookcase from collapsing.

But the year's most beautiful book within the realm of financial imagination—not reality, you understand, but something an average book buyer could at least dream about—is ***The Art and Spirit of Paris*** **(Abbeville, 1,654 pp., $385)**, exploring 2,000 years of Paris with over 1,400 reproductions.

Jean-Marie Pérouse de Montclos's ***Paris: City of Art*** **(Vendome, 700 pp., $85)** covers much of the same history well and more affordably. But if you can possibly swing it, *The Art and Spirit of Paris* is the one art book to buy this Christmas—and keep for yourself.

The art books worth buying for others begin with Paul Johnson's ***Art: A New History*** **(HarperCollins, 792 pp., $39.95)**, a volume that promised to be a curmudgeonly rant against the modern world—and turns out instead to be an utterly charming, deeply informative history. Then there's the catalogue to the Metropolitan's show, ***El Greco*** **(Yale Univ. Press, 320 pp., $65)**, and Yale's usual run of good art studies also includes ***John Singer Sargent: The Late Portraits*** **(Yale Univ. Press, 368 pp., $65)**, the final of a three-volume series about Sargent. Meanwhile, Werner Hofmann's set of reproductions in ***Goya*** **(Thames & Hudson, 344 pp., $75)** looks just the thing to go with ***Goya*** **(Knopf, 448 pp., $40)**, a study by Robert Hughes, and ***Francisco Goya*** **(Counterpoint, 272 pp., $26)**, a biography, due out in February, by the novelist and history writer Evan S. Connell—assuming that you wouldn't mind having three volumes on the violent Spanish painter in the house at the same time.

The great unwritten story of art books is what a rip-off many of them are: badly researched, badly printed, and poured out for the Christmas market. Among the few worth giving as presents are ***Marc Chagall*** **(Abrams, 236 pp., $60)** and Dirk de Vos's ***The Flemish Primitives*** **(Princeton Univ. Press, 216 pp., $55)**. Look as well for ***Botticelli*** **(Skira, 336 pp., $65)** and ***Leonardo da Vinci*** **(Taschen, 600 pp., $150)**. For something a little different, try ***The Beautiful Boy*** **(Rizzoli, 256 pp., $45)**, a collection of classic paintings of good-looking young men chosen by Germaine Greer—and who should know the topic better?

This was not a great year for books on architecture, but you can take a stroll through the history of American building—before it all turned into indistinguishable glass boxes—with Hugh Howard's ***Thomas Jefferson: The Built Legacy of Our Third President*** **(Rizzoli, 204 pp., $40)**, Samuel and Elizabeth White's ***McKim, Mead & White*** **(Riz-**

J. Bottum is Books & Arts editor of The Weekly Standard.

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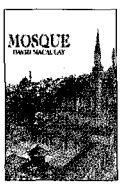
zoli, 304 pp., $75), Peter Pennoyer and Anne Walker's ***The Architecture of Delano & Aldrich*** **(W.W. Norton, 160 pp., $60)**, and Franklin Toker's study of Frank Lloyd Wright, ***Fallingwater Rising*** **(Knopf, 496 pp., $35)**. Although it's not a picture book, the architectural study of 2003 is David Mayernik's ***Timeless Cities: An Architect's Reflections on Renaissance Italy*** **(Westview, 274 pp., $26)**, a defense of classical models for the making of new architecture.

No one would have predicted that books about architectural design could become children's classics, but David Macaulay managed the feat with such bestsellers as *Cathedral*, *Pyramid*, and *Castle*. Macaulay's new entry is ***Mosque*** **(Houghton Mifflin, 96 pp., $18)**, another triumph in explaining to children how things get built. The equivalents for grownups may be Noël Riley's gorgeous ***The Elements of Design*** **(Free Press, 544, $75)** and Henry Petroski's much less profusely illustrated ***Small Things Considered: Why There Is No Perfect Design*** **(Knopf, 288 pp., $25)**.



While not quite Michael Bender's 1995 *Waiting for Filippo*—perhaps the best children's pop-up book ever—the British Museum's ***The Ancient Egypt Pop-Up Book*** **(Universe, 6 pp., $29.95)** will be welcomed as a present by some lucky child, as will Arlene Seymour's ***The Moon Book: A Lunar Pop-Up Celebration*** **(Rizzoli, 10 pp., $9.98)**. Definitely not for children, but worth noting as the strangest and possibly the worst idea for a book this year, is the new edition of one of Sir Richard Burton's translations, rendered by F.F. Arbuthnot as ***The Pop-Up Kama Sutra*** **(Stewart Tabori & Chang, 48 pp., $22.50)**. Just what you might imagine could pop up does, in fact, pop up, through several of the possible and impossible positions of the famous Indian sex guide.

Among coffee-table books, Peter Collier's ***Medal of Honor: Portraits of Valor Beyond the Call of Duty*** **(Artisan, 272 pp., $40)** is the clear winner, an impressive and moving volume of essays and photographs about American heroes. Frederic Brenner's photographic account of Jewish life, ***Diaspora: Homelands in Exile*** **(HarperCollins, 508 pp., $100)** is also worth a look.

For history buffs, the coffee-table book of the year is probably the reprint, now with 700 illustrations, of James M. McPherson's 1988 ***Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*** **(Oxford Univ. Press, 786 pp., $65)**. If you like such stuff, there are two new books on Hollywood clothing, Reeve Chace's ***The Complete Book of Oscar Fashion*** **(Reed, 192 pp., $29.95)** and Robert Osborne's *75 Years of the Oscar* **(Abbeville, 408 pp., $75)**. Better on fashion are Dilys E. Blum's ***Shocking! The Art and Fashion of Elsa Schiaparelli*** **(Yale Univ. Press, 312 pp., $65)** and ***Marimekko: Fabrics, Fashion, Architecture*** **(Yale Univ. Press, 286 pp., $60)**, about America's peculiar 1960s obsession with the fashion designs of Finland.

Dance saw at least one good book this year: Nancy Reynolds and Malcolm McCormick's ***No Fixed Points: Dance in the Twentieth Century*** **(Yale Univ. Press, 928 pp., $50)**. And for the comic-strip buff, there's really only one choice: ***The Complete Far Side*** **(Andrews McMeel, 1,250 pp., $135)**, Gary Larson's two-volume set with every one of his *Far Side* cartoons—4,300 of them, drawn from 1980 to 1994. Stranger even than Finnish furniture and fabrics, the *Far Side* remains an American classic.

My Friend, the Author

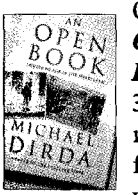
The main problem with hating books while working as the books editor of a magazine is . . . well, hating books while working as the books editor of a magazine. It's not something one can really explain to one's employers.

Fortunately, after the Christmas rush, my drunken rage about the publishing world tends to dissipate, and around the middle of January I begin to think—in that fragile, tentative way known to the slightly hungover—that I might feel well enough to get up around noon and skim, say, an old Perry Mason mystery, if it isn't one of the complicated ones.

In the meantime, however, life is made more difficult by the fact that so many writers for THE WEEKLY STANDARD publish books. Worse, the qualities that make them excellent magazine writers help them write *good* books.

The farmer and classics professor Victor Davis Hanson, for example, has published two books this year. The first is ***Mexifornia: A State of Becoming*** **(Encounter, 150 pp., $21.95)**, a controversial, fascinating argument about immigration from Mexico and the effect it has on both California and the immigrants. And the second is ***Ripples of Battle: How Wars of the Past Still Determine How We Fight, How We Live, and How We Think*** **(Doubleday, 288 pp., $27.50)**, an account of the invasion of Okinawa, Sherman's march through Georgia, and the Greek fight at Delium—each a struggle that determined, by its horror, how future wars would be fought.

The *Washington Post*'s Pulitzer-prize winning literary journalist, Michael Dirda, has just published a memoir of his childhood in a steelworking Ohio town, ***An Open Book: Coming of Age in the Heartland*** **(W.W. Norton, 320 pp., $24.95)**. Dirda manages to combine wistfulness and comedy in the way all memoirists know they should but seldom manage. This book would be a joy to give for Christmas—except for the fact that much of it is about the life Dirda found in books as he moved from a family of blue-collar nonreaders to the literary life. He's great at that, of course, but when his father complains, "All that kid wants to do is stick his nose in a book," I found myself cheering for the father.



While winning the national humanities medal, Midge Decter also produced ***Rumsfeld: A Personal Portrait*** **(Regan,**

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240 pp., $24.95), the story of the secretary of defense and his times, a great book to give any political junkie on your Christmas list. While moving to D.C. and taking up an editorial job at the *Washington Post*, Anne Applebaum published ***Gulag: A History*** **(Doubleday, 720 pp., $35)**, the most compelling answer to the gulag-deniers since Robert Conquest's *The Great Terror*. And while teaching at Yale, Donald Kagan penned ***The Peloponnesian War*** **(Viking, 511 pp., $29.95)**, the best gift for a classical-history buff.

The scholar Robert Louis Wilken gave us ***The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God*** **(Yale Univ. Press, 400 pp., $29.95)**, a study of the Church Fathers that serves as the intellectual companion to his standard-setting 1984 history, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*. And then, of course, there's Leon Kass, who managed to finish, while heading up the President's Council on Bioethics, his work on the Bible, ***The Beginning of Wisdom: Reading Genesis*** **(Free Press, 720 pp., $35)**, an analysis of the biblical text that compels the reader to contemplate and argue deeply with it. Just out from Kass, as well, is ***Beyond Therapy*** **(Regan, 352 pp., $13.95)**, a disturbing examination from the President's Council about what would happen if the biotech revolution actually succeeded at its claimed improvements of the human condition.

Stephen Schwartz—THE WEEKLY STANDARD's prolific writer on Islam and much else—saw into print the paperback edition of his bestselling ***The Two Faces of Islam*** **(Anchor, 368 pp., $14.95)**, and he has a new book arriving shortly, ***Iron Rose: The Jewry in the Balkans*** **(Anthem, 200 pp., $22.50)**.

Meanwhile, our regular art critic, Thomas M. Disch, has two of his golden oldies back in print: ***A Child's Garden of Grammar*** **(University of Michigan Press, 100 pp., $14.95)**, for which he won the American Academy of Arts and Letters' award for light verse, and ***The Prisoner*** **(I Books, 256 pp., $6.99)**, his 1967 science-fiction novel that was the basis of the 1960s television show, a perennial cult favorite.

Hardly anyone seems willing to identify nonbook books, but it's an important category for reviewers to remember. Dictionaries, for instance, are not really books in the bookish sense of a book. Neither are cookbooks, or concordances, or anything you can't sit down to read from beginning to end.

Still, all these are at least useful volumes. To reach the true nonbook book, you have to go to the paste-up objects turned out by celebrity authors. Collections of newspaper columns are always nonbook books; see, for example, Paul Krugman's ***The Great Unraveling*** **(Norton, 426 pp., $25.95)**. And so are most of the book-like things by television personalities. I tried earlier this year to interest a number of reviewers in doing an omnibus essay about all the recent nonbooks produced by television's political pundits, but I couldn't find anyone willing to do it.

Perhaps they harbored the hope that someday they might be invited to go on those pundits' shows, but my failure is probably just as well, for THE WEEKLY STANDARD's contributing editor Tucker Carlson has managed to violate the canons of his genre and write a real book, a book book. In ***Politicians, Partisans, and Parasites: My Adventures in Cable News*** **(Warner, 256 pp., $24.95)**, Carlson gives an autobiographical account of his transition from political writing to cohosting CNN's *Crossfire*. Along the way, he revels in some of America's political types—James Traficant ("because he was willing to appear on television drunk"), John McCain, and, surprisingly, Al Sharpton—and howls against others: the publicity hounds, the pompous fools, and the self-satisfied personalities. A fun, first-rate read.

More books by people on THE WEEKLY STANDARD's masthead: Contributing editor Max Boot published the paperback edition of ***The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*** **(Basic, 384 pp., $16)**, and Joseph Epstein wrote two small classics: ***Envy*** **(Oxford Univ. Press, 109 pp., $17.95)**, an elegant entry in a series on the seven deadly sins, and ***Fabulous Small Jews*** **(Houghton Mifflin, 352 pp., $24.95)**, his latest collection of short stories.

David Frum was prolific as well, starting 2003 with ***The Right Man: The Surprise Presidency of George W. Bush*** **(Random House, 303 pp., $25.95)**. A fast-reading account of Frum's year in the White House, *The Right Man* is particularly good on the way in which the attacks of September 11 brought out the best of Bush's potential. Frum is ending the year with another book, cowritten with Richard Perle, a call to arms entitled ***An End to Evil: What's Next in the War on Terrorism*** **(Random House, 284 pp., $25.95)**. Meanwhile—although the idea of an entire household of book writers terrifies me—Mrs. Frum, disguising herself under her maiden name, "Danielle Crittenden," published her first novel, ***Amanda Bright@home*** **(Warner, 368 pp., $23.95)**, a romp through middle-class money and politics in Washington.

Contributing editor Robert Kagan made the bestseller list with ***Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*** **(Knopf, 103 pp., $18)**. The difference between America and Europe, Kagan notes, is deeper than most observers realize. William Kristol joined the *New Republic*'s Lawrence F. Kaplan to pen ***The War Over Iraq: Saddam's Tyranny and America's Mission*** **(Encounter, 153 pp., $25.95)**, an argument not only for invading Iraq but for thinking about what comes next: "The mission begins in Baghdad, but it does not end there."

And then there's contributing editor P.J. O'Rourke, who brought three of his

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books back into print this year. Two are his bestselling rampages through public life in the 1980s: ***Parliament of Whores: A Lone Humorist Attempts to Explain the Entire U.S. Government*** **(Grove, 240 pp., $13)** and ***Give War a Chance: Eyewitness Accounts of Mankind's Struggle Against Tyranny, Injustice, and Alcohol-Free Beer*** **(Grove, 256 pp., $13)**.

The third is the work with which O'Rourke began his career, the book that pretty much destroyed Western civilization, ***National Lampoon's 1964 High School Yearbook: 39th Reunion Edition*** **(Rugged Land, 176 pp., $19.95)**. When we look back, what passed for bawdy humor back in the those days may seem relatively tame—well, actually, no, it doesn't. *National Lampoon's 1964 High School Yearbook* is still outrageous, still hilarious, and still a threat to everything Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, George Washington, and your high-school principal stood for. The best reprint of the year.

And Don't Forget . . .

I read perhaps five hundred books this year, looked at reviews for probably three thousand more, and held in my hands somewhere around an additional two thousand new volumes, each of them left unread and unreviewed. Nothing short of Jean-Paul Sartre's *No Exit* can really begin to describe the experience.

Still, some of them stand out, and if you really must oppress your friends and family with books this Christmas, you should start in poetry with Robert Lowell's ***Collected Poems*** **(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1,200 pp., $45)**. Karl Shapiro's ***Selected Poems*** **(Library of America, 197 pp., $20)** resurrects the unfairly faded writer, and Anthony Hecht's ***Collected Later Poems*** **(Knopf, 224 pp., $25)** is a triumph of mature work. Roderick Beaton's ***George Seferis: Waiting for the Angel*** **(Yale Univ. Press, 528 pp., $40)** is not an earth-shaking biography, but there's so little in English about the Greek poet that it's worth more than a look. And you might end the season with Eve Adler's ***Vergil's Empire: Political Thought in the Aeneid*** **(Rowman & Littlefield, 416 pp., $29.95)**, the most important book of the year for restoring a poet's reputation as a serious thinker.

The weirdest, but possibly the best, novel of 2003 is Mark Haddon's ***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*** **(Doubleday, 226 pp., $22.95)**, a literary tour de force posing as a murder mystery narrated by an autistic fifteen-year-old boy. I never know what to make of Jonathan Lethem, but his latest, ***The Fortress of Solitude*** **(Doubleday, 528 pp., $26)**, is an intermittently brilliant piece of writing, spanning three decades of life in Brooklyn.

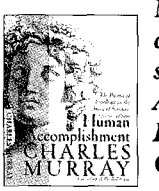
Tobias Wolff once wrote a great memoir, *This Boy's Life*, and he returns to that emotional territory in ***Old School*** **(Knopf, 208 pp., $22)**. Edward P. Jones received enormous praise, and deserved much of it, for his novel of a slave-owning black man before the Civil War, ***The Known World*** **(Amistad, 400 pp., $24.95)**. Even though it begins as an attack on religious believers, James Wood's ***The Book Against God*** **(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 272 pp., $24)** proves a subtle and delicate read.

I've already set aside as gifts three other literary volumes: ***The Afterlife*** **(Counterpoint, 320 pp., $26.95)**, Penelope Fitzgerald's posthumous collection of essays and reviews; ***Living to Tell the Tale*** **(Knopf, 496 pp., $26.95)**, the first volume of Gabriel Garcia Márquez's memoirs; and ***A Tragic Honesty*** **(Picador, 656 pp., $35)**, Blake Bailey's biography of Richard Yates, the novelist whose *Revolutionary Road* remains the best of the suburban genre Cheever and Updike became famous for mining.

In science fiction, I liked Dan Simmons's ***Ilium*** **(Eos, 592 pp., $25.95)** and Neal Stephenson's history-as-sci-fi, ***Quicksilver*** **(William Morrow, 944 pp., $27.95)**. In the mystery field, Andrew Wilson's biography of Patricia Highsmith, ***Beautiful Shadow*** **(Bloomsbury, 534 pp., $32.50)**, was a compelling read, and Roger L. Simon's comic novel ***Director's Cut*** **(Atria, 241 pp., $23)** was great fun. THE WEEKLY STANDARD's mystery critic, Jon L. Breen, also recommends Stuart M. Kaminsky's ***Not Quite Kosher*** **(Forge, 256 pp., $6.99)**, James Sallis's ***Cypress Grove*** **(Walker, 256 pp., $24)**, and two imports from the British satirist Ben Elton: ***Dead Famous*** **(Black Swan, 339 pp., $11.95)** and ***High Society*** **(Black Swan, 352 pp., $12)**.

Finally, there's nonfiction. Adam Bellow clearly had a lot of fun writing ***In Praise of Nepotism: A Natural History*** **(Doubleday, 576 pp., $30)**, and what better book to give your children? Michael Lewis wrote the business book of the year, ***Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game*** **(W.W. Norton, 288 pp., $24.95)**, and the fact that it's about baseball only makes it better. Adam Nicolson penned a surprise bestseller with ***God's Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible*** **(HarperCollins, 281 pp., $24.95)**, and, by God, it deserved all the praise it received. Harvard's Richard J. McNally declared victory in psychiatry's memory wars with ***Remembering Trauma*** **(Belknap, 420 pp., $35)**, while Anthony Swofford proved that soldiers can write with ***Jarhead: A Marine's Chronicle of the Gulf War and Other Battles*** **(Scribner, 257 pp., $24)**.

And to finish the year, there's Charles Murray's ***Human Accomplishment: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Arts and Sciences, 800 B.C. to 1950*** **(HarperCollins, 668 pp., $29.95)**, a book so rich, so complicated, and so strange that it defies categorization.



Maybe it's books like Murray's I need to jolly me back into book-loving again. Actually, I'd enjoy receiving any of these books for Christmas. Just not until after Christmas. ♦

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The first effects of the new Medicare reform will be felt in spring 2004, when prescription drug discount cards are issued.
—News item

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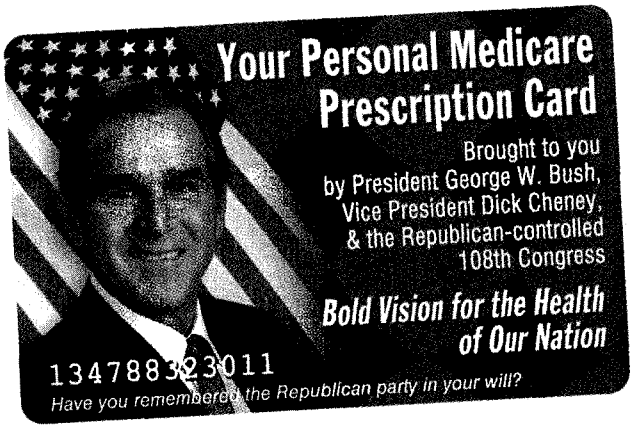

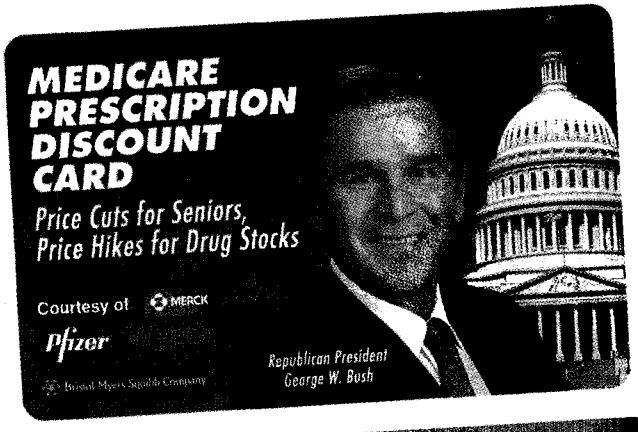

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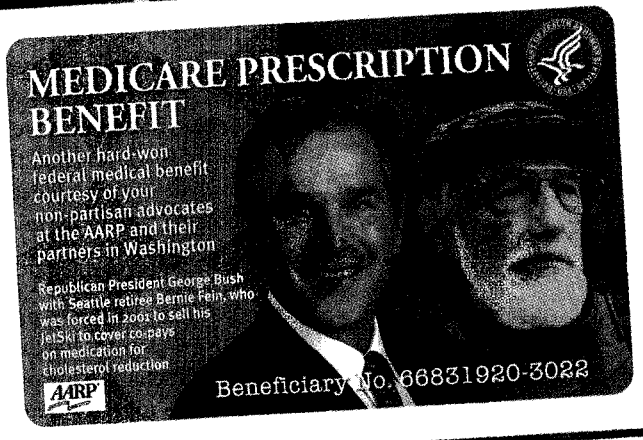

the weekly Standard
December 8, 2003

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Do We Need *More* Troops or *Different* Troops?

Bruce Berkowitz is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

When U.S. and British forces got bogged down last March in their run to Baghdad, legislators, media pundits, and armchair strategists claimed that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld had skimped on troops. The decisive victory that followed silenced them.

But now that our reconstruction efforts are encountering resistance by die-hard Baathists, foreign fundamentalists, and other assorted ne'er-do-wells, those same critics are now claiming that things would be a lot quieter in Iraq if we had listened to their advice and sent a bigger army to do the job.

Not so. The critics are compounding their earlier error with new ones. In the process, they are also overlooking an important new development—the role of reserves, a critical element in planning the future of the U.S. military.

The critics wanted more *combat forces*. The current situation, however, calls for *peacekeeping* and *nation-building forces*, which means military police who can establish order, public affairs specialists who can disseminate the message of the U.S. government, and civil affairs units who can deliver emergency aid to refugees. It also means intelligence units who can mix in with the local population and track down Saddam Hussein's remaining thugs.

The additional combat forces that the critics wanted back in March would have done little to help us in the current situation. Combat and peacekeeping require completely different capabilities.

Which brings us to the real problem today. The military has trained people in peacekeeping and nation building. But most of them are reservists, and those are the ones the Defense Department will need to rely more heavily on in the next few months.

The Pentagon claims that by 2004, 105,000 troops will be in Iraq, down from the current 130,000. Just over a third of those will be reservists—nearly three times as many as now.

Reservists disproportionately make up the forces used in peacekeeping and nation building. Ninety-seven percent of the army's civil affairs specialists are reservists; 82 percent of public affairs specialists are reservists. The figures are only slightly higher for military police, intelligence, and special forces.

Because it will be difficult to keep these people away from their civilian jobs, U.S. officials may come under pressure to cut the reconstruction process short, which could be disastrous.

Our current predicament is a legacy of the cold war, when it was assumed that reservists would be needed only for a short period and most likely in friendly locales, such as mopping-up operations in West Germany after a hypothetical Soviet invasion.

The situation has flip-flopped. The part of the war that combat forces perform is brief. But the operations in which reservists specialize—the war *after* the war—can take ten times as long.

Because we are likely to see this pattern repeated, we need to rethink our force structure. We may need to add more active-duty forces in noncombatant specialties or use more reservists in combat. Or we may need to spend more on defense.

Those are the costs of leading a war on terrorists and rogue states. The alternative is to rely on other countries or the UN—both of which have been unwilling to act decisively. Or we could hunker down and risk another attack like September 11. Today's debates over military reserve policy are really debates over America's role in the world.

—Bruce Berkowitz

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